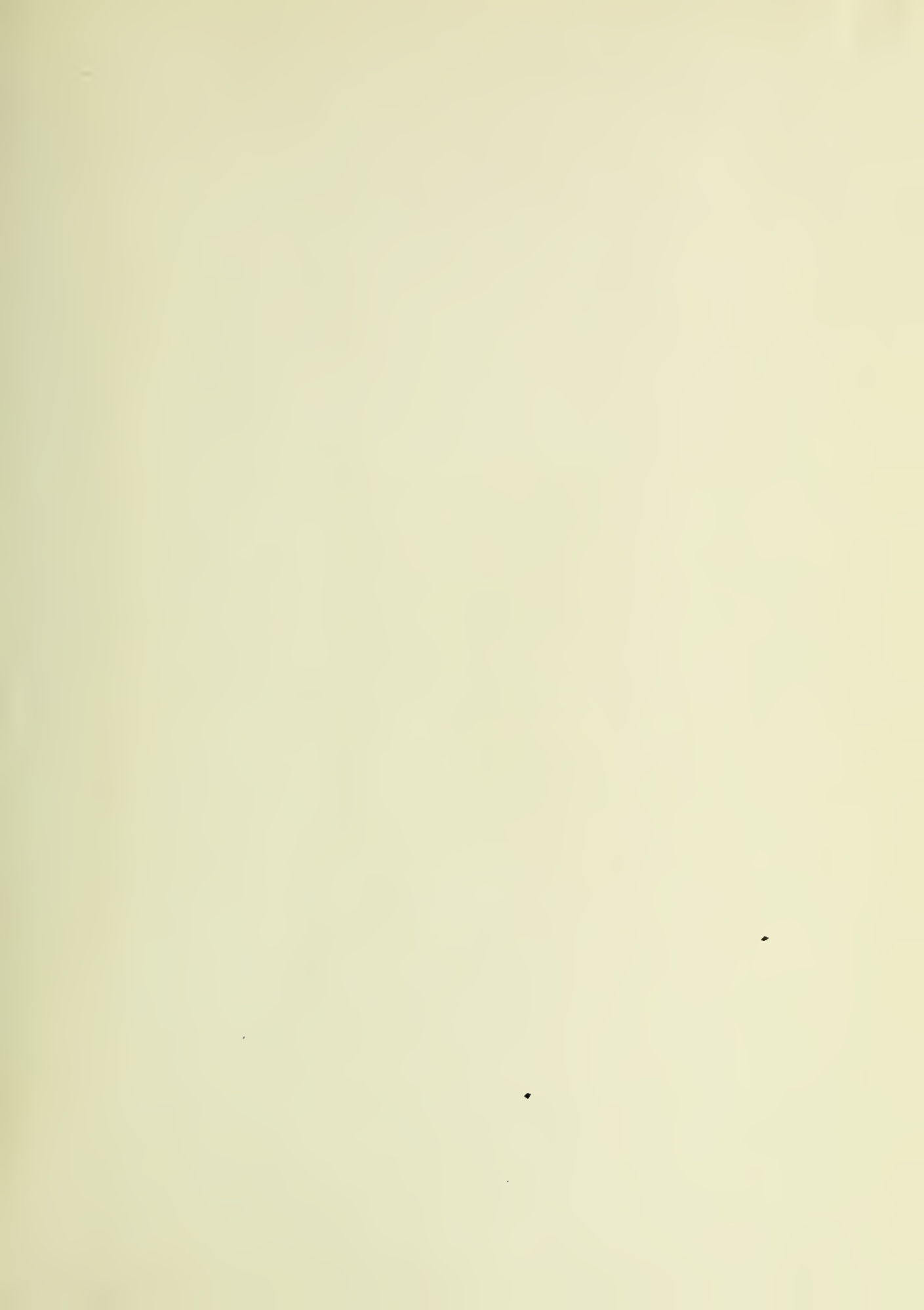




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31
A HISTORY OF MILITARY CONSCRIPTION IN ENGLAND
DURING THE GREAT WAR

BY

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THESIS

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Chapter One. Introduction.

"Owing to the summary rejection by the German Government of the request made by His Majesty's Government for assurances that the neutrality of Belgium will be respected, His Majesty's ambassador at Berlin has received his passports and His Majesty's Government have declared that a state of war exists between Great Britain and Germany as from 11 P.M. on August 4".¹ The foregoing statement, issued from the War Office in the early hours of August 5, 1914, committed Great Britain to a foreign war whose issues were the most momentous in all history and whose prosecution in August 1914 offered serious problems to British statesmen. Not the least of these problems concerned the adoption of a military policy.² A considerable section of British opinion was opposed to an active participation in a continental war.³ That Great Britain should go to war in behalf of a remote and insignificant nation like Serbia was ridiculous to many. Her plain duty, said others, lay in a strengthening of her home defenses and the maintenance of strict neutrality.⁴ This attitude was not confined to the professional pacifist class but showed itself in governmental circles in the resignation of three members of the ministry and in a dangerous hostility among Labour leaders in Parliament.⁵ The forces opposing active measures

1) Times, Aug. 5, p. 6; also Mr Asquith in the Commons, 65 H.C. Deb: 1963

2) The momentary hesitation of the Government is expressed by Sir Edward Grey in a speech in the Commons, Aug. 3; 65 H.C. Deb: 1824.

3) E.g. see "Nation", 15: 653, 656.

4) See remarks of J. Ramsay MacDonald in 65 H.C. Deb: 1830 and the Spectator, 118: 186.

5) Those resigning were Viscount Morley as Lord President of the Council, Mr John Burns as President of the Board of Trade and Mr C.P. Trevelyan as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education. See 65 H.C. Deb, 1961; Spect. 118: 164.

were, however, overborne. With the news of the violation of Belgium's neutrality, popular feeling turned from its hopes for peace to a vigorous and whole-hearted support of the Government. Party differences were laid aside in Parliament, the Opposition pledged its support to the ministry⁶ and, except for the few irreconcilables, a rare unanimity obtained in official circles. The Prime Minister on August 6 surrendered the post of Secretary of State for War to Lord Kitchener, in response to an unquestionably overwhelming public wish, and on the same day, Parliament, in a burst of enthusiasm, voted the Government five hundred thousand men and a hundred million pounds for the prosecution of the war.⁷ Within two weeks a British Expeditionary Force had landed in France on the way to the Belgian front.⁸

But to put into the field a ridiculously small expeditionary force was one thing; to recruit, equip and transport large armies was another. A short examination of the military resources of Great Britain in 1914 will suffice to suggest the magnitude of the task confronting the War Office. Whereas continental powers, under systems of compulsory service, could place in the field armies numbered by the million, the paper strength of the British army was not above 750,000 on a war footing.⁹ Of these numbers the Territorials were available under the law for home service

6) Speech of A. Bonar Law, 65 H.C. Deb: 2083-89.

7) 65 H.C. Deb: 2082, 2099; Lord Kitchener, in taking his cabinet position, established no political affiliations; see 17 H.L. Deb: 501

8) Statement issued by the Press Bureau on the night of August 17. Also Times, Aug. 18; Spect. 113: 251; 66 H.C. Deb: 665, 672; 17 H.L. Deb: 502. This force numbered about 150,000 all ranks (six infantry and one cavalry division); Statesman's Yearbook, 1917, p. 52.

9) On Home and Colonial Establishments, 235,000, (from this force was taken the expeditionary force); Special Reserves, 63,000; the Territorial Force, 250,000; National Reserve-old soldiers and sailors, fit for garrison and administrative duties-217,000. Figures are approximate: Statesman's Yearbook, 1916; 17 H.L. Deb: 401-403.

only, although, as a matter of fact, they volunteered almost to a man for overseas service in 1914.¹⁰ Even these were badly trained and poorly equipped and far below their established strength.¹¹ Many of the National Reserves were unfit for field service under modern conditions of warfare and readjustment was needed all along the line.

The armies of Great Britain, as maintained in the years preceding the war, were recruited by voluntary enlistment. At the outbreak of hostilities they consisted of two parts, each self-contained. The first of these, the Regular Army, furnished the standing army at home and the Indian and Colonial establishments.¹² It was composed of professional soldiers who served for twelve years, part of the time with the colours--usually seven years--and the remainder with the reserves. The old Militia had been replaced by the Special Reserve which furnished reinforcements for the original expeditionary force during the training period of the new levies.¹³ The second-line of Home Defense Army, was composed of the Territorial Force and the National Reserve. Under the Statute of 1907 the Territorial Force was organized in county units under the supervision of County Territorial Associations, of which the Lords Lieutenant of the Counties were presidents. Under the Lords Lieutenant were members of each branch of the existing Territorial Force in the county, representatives of the county borough councils and the universities, appointed by the Army Council, and members who

10) Statesman's Yearbook, 1917, p. 52.

11) 66 H.C. Deb: 794-798.

12) Jan. i, 1914, Home and Colonial, 156,000; Indian, 78,000, Statesman's Yearbook, 1915, xxxv; Times Hist. War. vi: 281.

13) Special Reserve, 63,000--17,000 below establishment.

represented the employers' and workers' interests. These county associations were charged with the duties of recruiting in time of peace and war, of maintaining the force upon embodiment and of paying separation allowances when on actual service. They were vested with considerable discretionary power, including freedom to cooperate with various local, voluntary and unofficial bodies.

The Territorial Force was to consist of such numbers as Parliament might from time to time provide and was available for service only within the United Kingdom. Its members were required to train for at least eight days and not more than fifteen days each year, though the Crown, by an Order in Council, might extend this period to thirty days or dispense with it altogether.¹⁴ Although this branch was evidently administered with some laxity as far as numbers are concerned, it formed a fairly efficient body and continued to furnish increments to the original force during the six months' training given to the volunteers of Lord Kitchener's armies. Under this system of voluntary enlistment something like 30,000 recruits were annually enrolled—a number considered barely sufficient for each week's enrolment during the first year of the war!¹⁵

A variety of reasons account for this comparative neglect of the military forces of the kingdom. Chief of these, however, were the great emphasis placed upon the efficiency of the fleet and its natural corollary, a movement for adequate home defense. Germany was frankly and openly characterized as

14) The text of the Army Act of 1907 (Territorial and Reserves Forces Act) may be found in Chitty's Statutes, 13:1043 et seq.

15) For 1913, Regular Army and Special Reserve, 33,541 and 21,823 respectively; Territorial Force, 66,650; 58 H.C. Deb: 605-6. 34,700 seems to have been the number considered necessary for the Regular army in the year preceding the war. 65 H.C. Deb: 255.

England's most likely and most formidable enemy and the latter power took her cue from the increased interest shown in the German fleet after the accession of William Second, to enter upon a period of naval increase. This feeling that the problem of defense was essentially one of naval defense led to an ever increasing attention to the navy and brought about the race of naval armaments between Great Britain and Germany which amazed the world during the last two decades.

This is not to say that British opinion had assumed an attitude of total indifference towards military affairs. That conditions within the army were unsatisfactory was universally admitted. The need of reform was evident to all. Divergence of opinion existed, however, both as to the means and the extent of this reform. Perhaps the most important and certainly the most widely known scheme was that proposed by the National Service League which carried on an active and well-organized propaganda for many years and ended by placing its organization at the disposal of the War Office on the outbreak of war.¹⁶ The program of the National Service league was briefly as follows: every able-bodied male in the United Kingdom was to be compelled by law to serve an initial period of four months' continuous training as infantry. This was to be followed annually by a fortnight's training in camp. A three years' course in musketry completed the schedule.¹⁷ About this program centered the chief currents of public opinion. Under the vigorous and popular leadership of Lord Roberts ¹⁸ it gathered to its standard those who

16) Spect.113:187.

17) Sat.Rev.117:69.

18) Lord Roberts' work for National Service is discussed in a memorial article in the Times for November 16, 1914.

were unwilling to go so far as compulsory service on the continental plan and those who were dissatisfied with the army as reorganized by Lord Haldane. Its friends claimed for it the merit of providing a large and fairly well-trained force available for Home Defense during the absence of an expeditionary force, whereas under the plan of Lord Haldane a period of six months' training after hostilities was frankly admitted as necessary. Moreover, while standing for a large navy, they refused to pin their faith to the activities of a fleet which, from the nature of the Empire, could not confine itself to home waters.¹⁹

The opponents of National Service were of two classes . The first of these urged that the proposed plan would at best give but a larger Territorial Force, poorly equipped and unwieldy from lack of officers.²⁰ This class, in general, protested against the faith in "mere numbers" which they saw in the National Service plan and pointed out the need of slowly evolving an army instead of attempting to call one forth full-panoplied by a War Office fiat. To accomplish this evolution, they said, compulsory service was necessary.

The second class adverse to National Service looked still more to the fleet and put itself on record as in favor of the army as remodelled by Lord Haldane. Aroused by the agitation for a measure of compulsion in the National Service scheme, this sec-

19) Spect.111:901;Sat.Rev.117:297.

20) Nineteenth Cent.68:755-64:"....and the deficiency in the efficiency of the Territorials Mr Haldane, Lord Esher and the National Service League believe can be made good by numbers; quite ignoring the fact that the more huge a partially trained and poorly officered force becomes, the more ponderous and less manageable it is in the field and the more it lies at the mercy of an inferior force well-trained and well-led."

tion of public feeling extolled the voluntary system during the years preceding the war and with increased zeal during its early stages, long before conscription as a legislative measure seemed imminent. Not only civilians but also military men held to the voluntary system as against the "veiled compulsion" of National Service, the former for sentimental, the latter for alleged professional reasons.²¹

The striking feature about every plan proposed was the revelation of the tremendous faith in the fleet. The most eloquent pleas for army reform lost half their force in view of the expressions of implicit trust in naval defense coupled with them. How such an enthusiasm could seize a people with all the force of a monomania, in view of the imperial responsibilities and widespread diplomacy of Great Britain is perhaps difficult to understand, and yet, the thought that the Empire would be forced to embark upon a continental struggle seems scarcely to have entered the considerations. And, in spite of the fact that a lively interest was manifested in military affairs, England characteristically clung to the old system. Mobilization brought together a fair-sized army but it was long before the first overseas force received strong increments of well-trained and equipped reinforcements. How the deficit was provided for under stress of war is the subject of the chapters which follow.

21) See the article "The Case for Volunteers" by Col. F.N. Maude in XIXth Cent. 77:1-12, Jan. 1915.

Chapter Two. Recruiting Kitchener's Armies.

The appointment of Lord Kitchener as Secretary for War met with enthusiastic and universal approval. Long and distinguished service in the field had not only given him a wide technical training in his profession but had also elevated him to the position of a national hero. His extraordinary, if somewhat inscrutable, personality had combined with his military record to a remarkable degree and had had the effect of giving rise almost to a Kitchener legend during his lifetime. Throughout the remainder of his career his word and influence had a weight second to that of no civil statesman and his opinion was accepted on all sides as the last word on things military. Whatever his faults as an administrator may have been, his success can not be lightly denied, when we consider the magnitude of his task and the manifest difficulties under which he labored. And there can be no doubt that his popularity was a tremendous asset in his own work and in the larger issues at stake for the Empire.¹

In taking over the work at the War Office, Lord Kitchener found himself in charge of a really efficient organization for the work in hand. The administrative reforms of Lord Haldane, though carried through on a peace-time basis, possessed a degree of elasticity and a power of adaptability scarcely to be expected. Although the event showed that the War Office had its defects, still it must be said that, on the whole, it performed admirably the huge mass of additional work thrown upon it by the set of wholly unprecedented circumstances which followed swiftly

1) For a short estimate of Lord Kitchener's work at the War Office, see Nelson's Hist. War, xiv:163-65.

upon the outbreak of war. This organization, with the additions made necessary, was retained and the work, generally speaking, followed the old lines, after taking into account the general readjustment necessary in all departments of an embattled democracy.

On August 8 Lord Roberts placed at the disposal of Lord Kitchener and the Government the whole of the organization of the National Service League, its work, for the time being, at least, being suspended. This gave to the Government the aid of an organization covering England, Scotland and Wales and numbering 250,000 members.² It is difficult, in the midst of a legion of private, local and unofficial recruiting bodies which sprang up or were revived in England at this time, to estimate the practical results of any single agency; but it may be confidently claimed that the influence of the National Service League was widespread and powerful and, as public opinion advanced to meet its proposals, that influence grew.

On August 9 Lord Kitchener appealed to the County Territorial Associations for continued aid not only in filling their own depleted ranks but also in enlisting the new armies.³ The Regular Army was thrown open to Territorials whose places were ordered filled as soon as possible. No men, save the thousands of early volunteers, showed a finer spirit of patriotism than the Territorials and the County Associations. Thousands of the men volunteered for foreign service, while the prosaic but important work of recruiting men to take their places went on slowly but efficiently until every eligible man became the King's soldier.

Besides these official or semi-official bodies the War Office was greatly aided by scores of unofficial and local com-

2) Spect. 113:187.

3) Times, Aug. 10, p. 6.

mittees engaged either in the active work of recruiting or in activities connected with the mobilization, housing, and maintenance of the new troops. There was, very naturally, little coordination possible among these organizations and not a little of the ill-advised criticism bestowed upon the Government and nation alike is to be attributed to the fact that this lack of coordination was overlooked by those whose enthusiasm for immediate results blinded them to the vexatious difficulties of the situation.

Not only did Lord Kitchener retain the existing organization of his department but he likewise attempted no innovations in the method of raising recruits. The new armies were to be raised by voluntary enlistment. Although Lord Kitchener had the vision to foresee a long war and may have looked forward to the application of compulsory methods, he nevertheless accepted the voluntary system and even lauded its efficiency as against the weaknesses of compulsory service.⁴ Even though his first speech in the House of Lords may have been interpreted as an expression of scepticism concerning the voluntary system,⁵ there is at least one telling argument to urge against those who advocated immediate compulsion. It is doubtless easier to prophesy after the event but it is certain that Lord Kitchener took the only course open to the Government under the circumstances. No decisive expression of public opinion had ever been obtained before the war upon the small measure of compulsion contained in the program of the

4) 17 H.L. Deb., 501-505.

5) "But if the war should be protracted, exertions and sacrifices beyond any which have been demanded will be required from the whole nation and Empire and.....we are sure they will not be denied to the extreme needs of the State by parliament of the people." Ibid. 505.

National Service League and there was, moreover, ample evidence that there was still much active opposition to this plan. It would have been impolitic and unwise had conscription been inaugurated at such a time. Besides, though Lord Kitchener stood free from political connections in his new post, he nevertheless sustained an official relationship with a Liberal ministry, traditionally opposed to drastic army reform; any attempt on his part to use his influence in behalf of such an innovation as compulsory service would have embarrassed his colleagues at a time when unity of purpose and solidarity of organization were vital. The truth is, the Government took the only course open to it and subsequent events prove beyond doubt the wisdom of their action.

Recruiting in England began before the appointment of Lord Kitchener. On August 4 the Army Reserve was called into permanent service and the Territorial Force was embodied by Royal Proclamation.⁶ On the same day the headquarters of the London Recruiting District in Great Scotland Yard was besieged by crowds of young men discussing the prospects of war and pressing forward to enlist and this flow of recruits continued through that day and the next.⁷ On August 6 the order went forth for 100,000 recruits as the first installment of the half million voted by Parliament. The flow of recruits continued and reached a point where it was found necessary to open divisional offices--at first five, though during the next six weeks the number was greatly increased.⁸ Generally speaking, the same success obtained not only in London but also in the large towns in the north. While a majority of the volunteers were for the Regular Army, many enlisted

6) 65 H.C. Deb., 1927-28; Times, Aug. 4, p. 9. 7) Times, Aug. 5, p. 3.

8) Times, Aug. 8, 12, 1914.

in the Territorials and it was reported within a week that most of their units were above war strength.⁹ Supplementing the work of the War Office were the efforts of private agencies. Several regiments were raised in London; and in Lancashire Lord Derby was largely instrumental in raising a new battalion at Liverpool.¹⁰ This wonderful enthusiasm was sustained with little fluctuation through the first month of the war and reached its height during the first week in September.¹¹ By August 26 one hundred thousand men had been enlisted for immediate service,¹² besides large additions to the Territorial Force, and on August 28 the call was sent out for the second hundred thousand.¹³

Even at this early date in the war, criticism was bestowed upon the Government for the comparative slowness of recruiting. But in this connection it must be remembered that, in addition to the one hundred thousand enlisted, the War Office had mobilized, equipped, and successfully transported to the front an Expeditionary Force of some one hundred fifty thousand men. It is no doubt true that more recruiting offices might have been thrown open and provision made for enlisting the hundreds who were each day turned away and yet, as was pointed out, the despatch of the Regular Army meant the removal of large numbers of recruiting officers and left the work to be done by those less acquainted with it, or left undone until official steps could be taken to carry it

9) Times, Aug. 8, p. 4.

10) Times, Aug. 18,

11) In London, 30,000 on Aug. 30-Sept. 9; 33,204 in the United Kingdom on Sept. 3. See 66 H.C. Deb., 663-664; also report of Mr Asquith's Guildhall speech of Sept. 4, in Times for Sept. 5.

12) Times, Aug. 26; Spect. 113:281.

13) The age limit for the second hundred thousand was extended and included all between the ages of nineteen and thirty-five. See Times for Aug. 28.

forward.¹⁴ It is more to be deplored, perhaps, that in the first rush of recruiting many men were enlisted whom England could ill spare.

If patriotism and enthusiasm supplied the first hundred thousand, the case was somewhat different in the recruiting which followed. A variety of reasons contributed to cause a slump in recruiting from which it may be fairly said, it never fully recovered. It will be sufficient to mention a few of these. In the first place the impression was widely prevalent that one hundred thousand was the total of the Government's demands.¹⁵ After the first burst of enthusiasm had passed and the first hundred thousand had been enlisted it was found extremely difficult to overcome the feeling that the needs of the situation had been met. In fact correcting this error was the heart of the recruiting problem in England throughout the greater part of the war. A second cause for the decrease in the rate of recruiting was the attitude of the Government toward separation allowances and pensions.¹⁶ With the characteristic British tendency toward exactness in financial legislation final settlement of a scale of allowances was postponed until a date long after that when decisive action would have had a salutary effect on recruiting, even though the cost might have been greater. Still another cause is found in the Government's management of the press censorship. Soon after the outbreak of the war British correspondents were excluded from the French and Belgian fronts and only extremely meager reports were allowed to reach England. The plan of the Government in this matter was no doubt wise but its application often took grotesque forms and it seems

14) Spect. 113:250.

15) Ibid. 113:285.

16) Ibid. 113:284; 5; Times, Nov. 7 and 12.

that the withholding of news in many cases had a prejudicial effect on recruiting.¹⁷ These and other conditions continued to operate as more or less serious obstacles throughout the first two years of the war. Perhaps the effect of none of them was rightly estimated and certainly any attempt to explain recruiting difficulties on these grounds alone was based upon a superficial examination of the circumstances. The truth of the matter was that neither Government nor people was fully alive to the seriousness of the conflict.

To combat these difficulties prompt action was necessary. By August 28 Lord Kitchener announced that the first hundred thousand men had been obtained. Immediately a vigorous campaign for the second hundred thousand was set on foot. The first thing necessary was to remove the impression that the first hundred thousand met the needs of the Government. The Prime Minister attempted to correct this feeling when he stated in the Commons, "We need all the recruits we can get". On August 29 it was announced that Mr Lloyd George would take the field on a recruiting campaign.¹⁸ On September 1, at the suggestion of Lord Kitchener, the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee was formed under the joint presidency of the Prime Minister, the leader of the Opposition, Mr Bonar Law, and the head of the Labour party, Mr Arthur Henderson. As announced in the "Times", the committee "will appeal to the political associations throughout the country for general assistance in the work of recruiting, will enlist the sympathy and help of peers, members of Parliament and Parliamentary candidates, will assist the county recruiting committees in obtaining Parliamentary speakers for public meetings, will issue and circulate suitable publications in

17) New States.3:578,606 etc; Nation,15:777,803; Times, Nov.7 ff.

18) Spect.113:282.

leaflet and pamphlet form and will in every possible way work in conjunction with the recruiting agencies".¹⁹ While this program was in the main carried out, the most significant work of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, for our purpose, consisted in the appeal to the householders of the United Kingdom sent out in November and December 1914, the results of which will be mentioned later. Early in September Mr Asquith addressed a letter to the Lord Mayors of London, Dublin and Cardiff and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, proposing to hold meetings in these cities "to stimulate and organize public opinion and public effort".²⁰ It is significant that all these methods had, for their secondary motives, at least, the education of the people to the seriousness of the situation. They were the beginning of a series of movements which were, within two years, to work a slow but effective revolution in British public opinion.

Recruiting for the second hundred thousand proceeded rapidly and it was announced during the first week of September that 260,000 men had been added to the army since the outbreak of war.²¹ On September 10, in moving a vote for an additional half million men, Mr Asquith announced that approximately 439,000 of the first half million men had been secured, exclusive of enlistments in the Territorial Force, and that practically 1,200,000 men were under arms.²² It was further stated that the number of training camps was being constantly increased, that cooperation was proceeding rapidly between the War Office and the County Associations and that provision had been made by which recruits might return to

19) Times, Sept. 1; for names of members see 70 H.C. Deb., 1482.

20) Spect. 113:315.

21) Times, Sept. 5; Nation, 15:803.

22) 66 H.C. Deb., 663-4.

their civil employment under Government pay while awaiting the call for training.²³

In meeting the overwhelming difficulties of the situation neither the Government nor its critics were wholly right. The latter urged their case in vigorous terms both in Parliament and in the Press, belaboring the Government for their dilatory tactics in dealing with the matter of separation allowances, camp accommodations, press censorship and the pay of recruits. While much of this was in a measure just and it was no more than the truth that recruits were coming in faster than they could be cared for, the fact remains that had arrangements at the War Office been completed before the call was sent out, recruits might not have been forthcoming at all. The blunt truth persisted that the Government had to take recruits when they came, even though insufficient accommodations might work hardships in some cases. But, though much of the criticism was well calculated to be destructive, it was doubtless responsible for the unique recruiting campaign carried out during the autumn and winter of 1914. By the end of October, in spite of all efforts, recruiting for "Kitchener's Armies" again suffered a serious falling off.²⁴ It was easily shown that news of disaster on the continent, and the sporadic raids of German cruisers and aircraft on the coast towns had always the effect of producing a temporary rush to the recruiting stations.²⁵ But these agencies, though undoubtedly quite effective, were not wholly reliable. Then began the most vigorous and enthusiastic series of recruiting efforts which England witnessed during the days of the voluntary system.

23) 66 H.C. Deb., 666-668.

24) Times, Nov. 7, p. 10; Times, Hist. War, 5:294-5.

25) E.g. after the threatened capture of Paris late in August, New States, 3:651; after fall of Antwerp, Times, Nov. 5,

Lord Kitchener, in a speech at the Guildhall on November 9, had asked for "men and still more men" and this was the signal for the revival of every agency of advertisement and appeal and the creation of some hitherto unused. Recruiting speeches by leaders representing every shade of political opinion filled the air, and huge mass meetings held forth not only in the capital but in urban and rural centers throughout the kingdom. Returned soldiers with the mud of Flanders upon their uniforms were pressed into service. Every variety of advertisement, with and without complete knowledge of the psychology of the case, assailed the eye of the eligible civilian or directed its appeal to the women of Britain. The "scrap of paper" with the signature of Palmerston and an appropriate caption, and the portrait of Lord Roberts with a more telling appeal, were reproduced and scattered broadcast. Every conceivable device of the poster-designer's art was freely used in an attempt to allure, shame, or cajole the unwilling or unaroused young man into enlisting; while the financial side of the war received its support in a series of fantastic and highly-coloured pictures of hoarded shillings.²⁶

While the principal squares and buildings of London were placarded with posters, vacant walls and lamp posts and taxicabs carried their own messages of invitation or appeal, from the simple legend "Join the Army Now" to the more elaborate pictorial arguments.

In the midst of this great popular effort the work of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee began. It was practically impossible to reach those in the outlying districts through the ordinary means of recruiting rallies. On this account the committee decided to take a voluntary census of the kingdom by making a

26) Times Hist War, 5:294-5.

direct appeal to all householders. Through the medium of the Householders' Forms which were issued from November 12 onward it was intended to compile a list of all those willing to serve either at the front or in non-combatant work. Cities and large towns were excluded from the canvass and circularization was at first restricted to the Eastern Command, though it was subsequently extended to the whole kingdom. By the middle of December 4,400,000 householders had been circulated and by December 22 two and a half million replies had been received, of which number about 220,000 were promises to enlist. Filling out the blanks supplied was purely voluntary and the rather meager returns is perhaps indicative of the temper of the people at large. However that may be, these measures, coupled with the vigorous criticism of the Government, which grew louder instead of decreasing, were successful for a time in reviving recruiting. On November 17 Mr Lloyd George informed the House of Commons that two million men were then actually under arms and at the same time Parliament voted an increase of one million.²⁷ A few days later Lord Kitchener announced that about thirty thousand recruits were coming in each week exclusive of regiments which were being formed by different localities.²⁸

The criticism of the Government at this juncture is particularly worthy of mention, not because of its novelty, but because of its undoubted indication of the changing temper of the people. Simultaneously with the temporary slump in recruiting came a crystallization of sentiment and a concentration of criticism upon what were considered the most obvious shortcomings of the Government.

27) 68 H.C. Deb., 349.

28) 18 H.L. Deb., 189.

The matter of separation allowances was still unsettled. In criticising the dilatory attitude of the Government in this regard, Mr Walter Long swept aside as irrelevant all other objections save this one. His criticism was seconded by the testimony of members of both parties and the press became more and more aggressive and outspoken. Finally on November 17 Mr Asquith was able to announce that a revised scale of separation allowances, effective for 26 weeks, had been fixed upon and that the matter of pensions would be given attention in the meantime.²⁹ At the same time suggestions as to the comfort and accommodations of training camps were once more brought to the attention and adopted. But more efficient than any of these measures of practical expediency was the growing agitation for some form of compulsion and the rather marked decrease in the opposition to it. The arguments were no different, but four months of war had served to point the moral.

This agitation, moreover, was not new. As early as August 26 compulsory service was suggested in the House of Commons where its discussion was discouraged by the Prime Minister and by the action of Lord Kitchener in his retention of the voluntary system.³⁰ On August 31 there was published in the "Times" a letter from Lord Roberts in which he expressed his opinion that "we shall most certainly have to resort to conscription". Very early in the war Mr Lloyd George had made statements which might, with more than a show of reason, be interpreted as favoring conscription. The "Times" conducted a continuous campaign directed towards that end, while as early as December 1914 the Manchester "Guardian" saw "the shadow

29) 68 H.C. Deb., 34.

30) 66 H.C. Deb., 43.

of conscription" already over the country as a result of slack recruiting in large industrial centers.³¹ At the same time the columns of the "Saturday Review" and the "Spectator" teemed with letters and articles favoring conscription. On the other hand the "New Statesman" considered compulsion at that time as a grave menace to the national unity and, while recognizing the possible need for it later, urged further dependence upon existing defenses and continued confidence in the patriotic spirit of the people at large. The "Nation" lost no opportunity to combat every suggestion of compulsion. But against this agitation the Government stood firm. A majority of the Cabinet was opposed to conscription, or at least too uncertain of the ground to consider it seriously.

This does not mean, however, that the subject was not discussed in Parliament. Early in January 1915, Lord Haldane took occasion to remark in the House of Lords that "compulsory service is not foreign to the constitution of this country" and "that at a time of national necessity every other consideration must yield to national interest and we should bar nothing in the way of principle if it should become necessary." The Earl of Selborne, on the same occasion, said: "If our voluntary system does not produce all the men required we may have to fall back upon that inherent obligation which lies on every citizen"--and went on to urge national organization in anticipation of such action.³² Within a week after these remarks the "Spectator" came out fairly and squarely for compulsion as the only means of meeting the requirements.³³ But all such arguments were foredoomed to failure in the face of the solid opposition of the Government. In fact, the situation was one of extreme

31) Quoted in Literary Digest for Dec. 12, 1914; 49:1168.

32) 18 H.L. Deb., 371, 378.

33) Spect. 114:68.

difficulty for the Cabinet. To inaugurate compulsion in the midst of a professedly successful campaign of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee would have been manifestly unwise and like to precipitate a crisis. In the absence of any expression on the part of Lord Kitchener and in view of the uncertain trend of public opinion, it was clearly the part of wisdom to delay decisive action. Moreover, the threatening attitude of Labour and the fast approaching crisis in the munitions industry were factors in the situation which made a radical change of policy dangerous in the extreme.

From the early spring of 1915 the recruiting problem became more and more involved with that of munitions. Shortly after the first of the year reports on the military resources grew more and more rare and the attention of the public was focussed to an increasing degree upon the efforts to supply material in larger quantities. This shifting of interest was due, in the main, to two causes. By this time the Government had well in hand the more serious problems of training and equipping recruits and the vexed question of separation allowances had been finally settled. In the second place, Lord Kitchener, while drawing closer the veil over recruiting results, had caused it to be known that men were coming in in satisfactory numbers.³⁴ These questions being temporarily removed from the center of discussion, Parliament and the country could turn to new problems.

34) Spect.114:318: "All we know is that the numbers are very satisfactory...The War Office desire for secrecy has been backed up loyally by the Press. Information as to recruiting and the progress of the new armies has practically disappeared from the newspapers." See ibid.425-6.

About the middle of March 1915, Lord Kitchener, speaking in the House of Lords, made a strong appeal to workers of munitions in which he announced that the factories were far behind with their contracts and that the "supply of war material at the present moment and for the next two or three months is causing me very serious anxiety". In his statement of the case he was ably seconded by Mr Henderson and Mr Barnes in the Commons.³⁵ These statements, together with the general unrest among the workers and the increasing demands for material by the armies in the field, served to place the whole question of labour in the forefront of discussion. Under the Defence of the Realm Act, passed March 15, the Government made an attempt to deal with the problem by placing the general supervision of war industries in the hands of Mr Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer. In a meeting of representatives of the Trade Unions with Mr Lloyd George on March 17, the latter made an urgent appeal to both employers and workers to sink all differences and concentrate their energies on the output of munitions. Two days later an understanding was reached by which the Labour representatives agreed to the Government's request for no stoppages by strikes and the use of arbitration in disputes, the interests of the workers to be safeguarded by an Advisory Committee named by the Government. Relaxation of Trade Union restrictions was to end with the war and wages were not to be adversely affected by the introduction of female or semi-skilled workers.³⁶ The wide latitude for interpretation allowed by the terms of this agreement and the failure of both employers and workers to live up to it

35) 70 H.C. Deb., 1823-4; see also Spect. 114:390.

36) Times, March 20, p. 11; Spect. 114:391.

marked it from the first as a measure of expediency rather than as one of vigorous efficiency. It demands mention in this connection, however, because of its relation to the larger problem of labour in general and on account of its direct bearing upon both industrial and military compulsion.

The problem of munitions, the Cabinet crisis in May, the formation of the Coalition Cabinet, National Registration, and the fortunes of the British arms overseas served during the summer of 1915 to monopolize public interest and keep the recruiting question in abeyance. While the campaign for recruits continued along the old lines, enlivened by posters and speeches, it was clearly evident that the old system was fast failing to produce adequate results. The events of the summer bear testimony to the changing tide of national endeavour.

Chapter Three. The Coalition Cabinet and National Registration .

Throughout the early months of 1915 the trials of the Government grew greater and more complicated. In the nature of things this condition could lead to but one end. Some notice of the Cabinet reorganization is here necessary, not only because of its immediate results, but more so because it marked a step towards a new policy in England's conduct of the war.

The problem of shells was the greatest single factor in the military and political situation during the first half of the year. Related to it was every other problem with which the Government was forced to deal. Very early in the year it was becoming increasingly evident that, as the area of war grew more extensive and the call for troops more insistent, the demand for munitions would grow louder. Recruiting had already had the effect of reducing the labour market to a chaotic condition in many places, and the Government faced the problem of securing an adequate supply of workers. This could be solved only by measures which might very possibly complete the disorganization, on the one hand, or alienate a powerful and sensitive section of the population on the other. The dilemma of the Government was rendered more difficult by the fact that the agitation for compulsion and the criticism of recruiting methods were growing in volume.

The talk of compulsion at this time could have but one effect. Labour saw clearly, as never before, how the successful conduct of the war, in a peculiar and important sense, was in its hands. In the face of the outspoken demands for conscription Labour interests felt themselves bound to act with caution. The coincidence of

the drift toward conscription and the appearance of the problem of munitions gave the workers good reason to fear some form of industrial conscription. Not unnaturally they were unwilling to surrender even temporarily, and under the strongest possible guarantees, the rights which half a century of agitation had secured to them. This aspect of the problem was made more difficult of solution by the fact that prices were steadily rising while wages remained nearly stationary. And, in the meantime, makers of munitions waxed rich. There was a palpable injustice in the situation which labour leaders were not slow to point out. To ask that Trade Unionists should agree to a relaxation of restrictions for the period of the war could easily be interpreted as a contemplated step toward industrial compulsion on the part of Capital.

In the face of their uncomfortable alternatives the Government hesitated, while discussions of the high cost of living and proposals for the relaxation of Trade Union restrictions filled the debates in the House of Commons. Members of Parliament argued with zeal that the rise in prices was due directly to the inequality of sacrifice which permitted one section of society to grow rich from war while condemning the worker to insufficient wages. To these charges the Government replied that it was not a matter in which the authorities could interfere--a decision which they were later to revoke. As to the specific question of labour also, the Government procrastinated. Shortly after the opening of Parliament, Mr Tennant, the Under-Secretary for War appealed to Labour members "to prevail upon the Trade Unions of this country to adopt a measure of a purely temporary kind for the relaxation of some of their

more stringent restrictions".¹ Further than such appeals, however, the Government did not go.

In the meantime, perhaps because of the Government's hesitation to adopt decisive measures, which placed Labour in an extremely uncomfortable position, industrial unrest was steadily growing. Beginning with shortness of time and underproduction, this increased rapidly in seriousness, strikes flared up and lockouts were threatened. At a time when the maximum of production was a grim necessity, the industry of England came near to a complete breakdown. In the cotton, coal, transportation and ship-building industries strikes were frequent, and Cabinet Ministers were sent scurrying over the country to manufacturing centers to address urgent, if not frantic, appeals to employers and workers to speed up production to the maximum.² At the same time strong measures were urged upon the Government while Labour sympathizers held up grim warnings and made ominous predictions. Connected with the problem of labour was the drink question. When slackness of production and loss of time in manufacturing were laid to the door of drink, the Government prepared to take vigorous action. This, however, was looked upon as an unjust indictment by a considerable section of labour and in the end the Government were forced to wash their hands of a problem which they had in the first place declared vital.

This vacillating policy on the part of the Government could not buttend to lower their credit in those very circles from which adverse criticism was most likely to come. At the same time it can

1) 69 H.C. Deb., 285.

2) During the first eight months of 1915 there were 469 strikes, involving 370,887 men and causing a stoppage of work equivalent to 2,438,400 days. The miners led in the number of strikes. See Whitaker's Almanach, 1916, p. 810.

not be doubted that in the country the ministry was popular enough. While it was comparatively easy for Labour leaders and the Government to come to an understanding on the points at issue, the Labour press and the workers in general felt keenly the lack of the spirit of compromise on the part of the employers. This anomalous condition is to be accounted for by the fact that, while the official opposition in the House of Commons was willing to give in its allegiance and call a truce at the beginning of the war, it was well-nigh impossible to muzzle effectually the opposition press. Generally speaking, the Parliamentary Debates for the first year of the war show a surprising degree of cooperation between the Government and the erstwhile opposition.

On the other hand, the "Times", which lost no opportunity to bring discredit upon the Asquith Government, kept up an incessant campaign of criticism which could not well be stifled even had it been desirable to put an end to it. Its columns were filled with agitation for compulsion, national service, removal of the censorship and "industrial organization", while its editorial policy was one of unsparing fault-finding with the Government. To offset the activities of the "Times", the pacifist journals anathematized the idea of conscription, either military or industrial, and railed at the plan for "national organization" as impossible, dwelling upon the disastrous results of either course of action in a way which certainly found no widespread response from the mass of workers who were more intimately concerned with more elemental issues. But it is significant that even such a stout defender of the Asquith Government as the "Spectator" talked of the need for an infusion

of new vigor into the Cabinet.

In the House of Commons on May 12, Mr F.H. Booth, a Liberal member asked the Prime Minister "whether, in view of the war and in view of the steps necessary to be taken in order to grapple with the rearrangement of industry and social life consequent upon a long struggle, he would consider the desirability of admitting into the ranks of ministers leading members of the various political parties in the House". Mr Asquith replied that, "while the Government was greatly indebted to the leading members of all parties for suggestions and assistance on certain specific subjects, the step suggested was not in contemplation".³ Thus the matter stood until an event occurred during the following week-end which, if not the cause for the formation of a new cabinet, was at least the occasion.

On May 17 it became known that Lord Fisher, the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty, had resigned his post and gone into retirement. Speculation was rife as to the cause of Lord Fisher's action but it was generally attributed to disagreement between himself and Mr Winston Churchill, First Civil Lord, regarding the conduct of the Dardanelles expedition. Mr Churchill was charged on all sides with forcing his opinion against the advice of the expert naval advisers at the Admiralty.

While the Government made no effort at the time to correct this impression, later disclosures proved its inaccuracy, and indeed, Mr Churchill's inclusion in the reorganized Cabinet, even in an unimportant post, might have served to dispel the current belief. Speaking in the Commons just a month later, Mr Asquith very frankly

3) 71 H.C. Deb., 1642.

stated that the Dardanelles expedition had been undertaken with the approval of the whole Cabinet and any attempt to place the blame upon any one individual was beside the point.⁴ A week later, Mr. J. A. Pease, the Postmaster-General in the new cabinet, admitted the failure of the former Government to grapple successfully with the problems of munitions and equipment which were so urgent in the first few months of the year. Perhaps the best statement of the case was that made by the Marquess of Lansdowne, former leader of the Opposition in the Lords. "It seemed to me," he said, "that from the moment when the official Opposition desisted from performing the task which properly belongs to it in normal times, something in the nature of a fusion had become necessary. My own firm conviction is that, even if the particular incident which brought matters to a head had never occurred, the fusion of parties would have taken place all the same. It was clearly required by the events with which both parties were confronted".⁵ Exactly a week after the question of Mr. Booth, the Prime Minister announced in the house that "steps were in contemplation which involved a reconstruction of the Government on a broader personal and political basis",⁶ and within a few days the Coalition Cabinet had come into existence.

As ultimately constituted the new Cabinet consisted of 12 Liberals, 8 Unionists, 1 Labour member and Lord Kitchener. The changes while not many, were in some cases important. Mr. Balfour took Mr. Churchill's place at the Admiralty, the latter becoming Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, while Sir Henry Jackson became First Sea Lord, following Lord Fisher's retirement. Mr. McKenna took over the Exchequer which Mr. Lloyd George left to fill the newly-created post

4) 72 H.C. Deb., 557-561.

5) 19 H.L. Deb., 9-10.

6) 71 H.C. Deb., 2392-3.

of Minister of Munitions. Sir John Simon gave over the Attorney-Generalship to Sir Edward Carson to become Home Secretary; Mr Bonar Law became Colonial Secretary and Mr Walter Long President of the Local Government Board. Lord Lansdowne sat in the new cabinet as Minister without Portfolio. By a small majority the Executive of the Parliamentary Labour Party permitted Mr Arthur Henderson to accept the Prime Minister's invitation to join the Cabinet where he held the Presidency of the Board of Education.⁷ Two other Labour leaders, Mr W Brace and Mr G.H. Roberts held the posts of Under-Secretary for Home Affairs and Junior Lord of the Treasury respectively. The Unionist members joined the coalition with the approval of both Lord Lansdowne and Mr Bonar Law.⁸ It is a question which cannot be answered whether, in forming the new cabinet, Mr Asquith was yielding to outside pressure or making a clever bid for assurance of Parliamentary support. His own statement, made subsequently, would seem to give strength to the latter view,⁹ though the apparent abruptness of his change of front might argue for the former.¹⁰

The most important change in the new Cabinet was the creation of a minister of munitions. If the administration of this branch of war activity had been unsatisfactory as a department of the War Office, placing it in the care of a special cabinet minister at least promised more efficiency. On June 23 the Government brought in its Munitions of War bill which passed into law early in July. By this bill the Minister of Munitions was granted plenary powers under the Defence of the Realm Act of March 15 and the Ministry of -----

7) Nation, 17:238.

8) Nation, 17:234; a list of the Liberal and Coalition Cabinets showing changes and party alignment may be found in Times Hist. War, 5:315.

9) 72 H.C. Deb., 557-561; Nation, 17:370.

10) Times Hist. War, 5:311-312.

Munitions Act of June 3. This disposition of the question, although not destined to be final or to give complete satisfaction, removed the munitions problem, for a time, at least, from the center of the stage. We may now turn to the work of the Coalition Cabinet which bears more directly upon our subject.

About the time of the organization of the new Government, discussion of the question of national organization had become general. The temporary breakdown at the War Office, the crisis in munitions, and the acuteness of the labour question had all been contributing factors to the feeling that a more united national effort might offer a satisfactory solution to the problem of a more vigorous conduct of the war. The work of private individuals in cooperating with the Government and the introduction of large numbers of women into industry had called attention to the fact that assistance might be expected from all classes and from both sexes.

How to organize such assistance was the question. In the face of the uncertain temper of public feeling the former Government had felt reluctant, if not actually unsafe, about using compulsion even to the slight degree necessary to gain the information upon which organized national effort might be based. On the other hand, the application of the voluntary principle had been unsatisfactory in its results. During the first eight months of the work of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee some eight million householders' forms had been circulated all over England, and of these only 3,600,000 had been returned--approximately 44 per cent.¹¹

Granting the urgency of the need there seemed but one means of filling it--recourse to some measure of compulsory enrolment for

¹¹) Statement of Mr Arthur Henderson in the House of Commons; 73 H.C. Deb., 145-46; July 5, 1915.

war work. It will be remembered that the Earl of Selborne, speaking on the general subject of compulsion, early in January, had pointed out the need of a comprehensive organization of the national resources.¹² The "Times" had long been urging such an industrial organization and the National Service League bent its efforts to securing much the same end. By the middle of May the crisis in munitions had had the effect of winning many converts to the plan. A great many of these, however, while voicing their approval of the new scheme in the abstract, saw no hope for its efficient application as a practical measure. The "New Statesman", while acknowledging the need of national organization, pronounced it an impossibility for the present war, for, "to establish a machine to use every adult between 20 and 50 in the middle of a great war, merely argues an abysmal lack of administrative experience".¹³ The "Nation", besides laying the same strong emphasis upon the vastness of the task from the purely mechanical point of view, saw in it a menace to national unity in its compulsory nature.¹⁴ The "Saturday Review" confidently asserted that "the mobilization of the whole of our resources....implies a colossal undertaking which would certainly take several years and which would perhaps take the best part of a generation to prepare".¹⁵ Even the loyal "Spectator" was disposed to minimize the importance of a National Register as a means of securing industrial workers and saw its chief value in its being a step toward "that compulsion without which the nation will find it impossible to get through the war with a due respect to justice and efficiency".¹⁶

12) 18 H.L.Deb., 371, 386, 392; also Contemp. Rev. 107:714.

13) New States. 5:194, 290.

14) Nation, 17:210, 278.

15) Sat. Rev. 119:865-566.

16) Spect. 115:67, 770.

Whatever may have been in the minds of the Government before bringing in the National Registration Bill, its introduction and passage through the House were fraught with difficulty. Between the agitation for National Service and the hostile attitude of the anti-conscriptionists, their position was one which called for wariness.¹⁷ The matter was one which did not closely follow party lines and opponents were numerous and strong in every political camp. But arguments in its favor were stronger and more patent than the objections. The deplorable condition in industry, the prevalence of strikes, the failure of the Dardanelles expedition, the threatened collapse of Russia, and the grave slump in recruiting--all were insistent arguments which called for an attempt at reform.

On June 8 and 15, General Sir Ivor Herbert opened the question in the House of Commons by asking the Prime Minister "whether in view of the difficulties that have arisen through the withdrawal of skilled workmen from certain industries, he had considered the advisability of taking measures for the compulsory registration of the male population of the kingdom with a view to the employment of such men in the most effective manner for the energetic prosecution of the war".¹⁸ A week later the same question was asked by Sir Henry Craik, after which Mr Asquith promised the introduction of such a bill "in the course of the next week".¹⁹ On June 29 the Bill for a

17) Fortn. Rev. N.S. 98:432-3: "To be in charge of the National Registration Bill was no sinecure. It was the first legislative proposal of the new Government and a number of prominent Radicals seized the opportunity of venting their extreme ill-humor over the fall of the late Government and displaying their distrust of the principle of registration".

18) 72 H.C. Deb., 179, 541.

19) 72 H.C. Deb., 935, 1329.

National Register was introduced by Mr Walter Long under the ten-minutes' rule and read the first time.²⁰

In the words of its sponsor, the bill provided for "the compulsory registration of the people of this country, male and female, between the ages of 15 and 65; questions will be put as to their age and employment and they will be asked to state whether they are willing to volunteer for any special form of labour with which they are specially acquainted other than that in which they are now engaged".²¹

On the second reading by far the greatest opposition was on the ground that the Bill was but a step towards the adoption of full-fledged conscription, "the thin edge of the wedge".²² The enmity of this class of the opposition to the National Service scheme, of which they considered the National Register one phase, was well expressed by Mr Philip Snowden, Labour member, who openly branded the Bill as a sop to the Northcliffe papers and accused the Coalition Government of being the tool of the owner of the "Times".²³ On this point, the "New Statesman" said: "Whether the Bill is in reality a sop to Lord Northcliffe, we neither know nor care. It gratuitously insults the intelligence of the country. The Government are again treating the people as if they were silly children".²⁴ On the compulsory feature of the Bill the "Nation" asserted that "the Ministerial attitude was a nice study in the art of facing both ways",²⁵ and, as before, continued to call for a more vigorous use of the voluntary machinery at hand. After the passage of the Bill, however, the same journal

20) 72 H.C. Deb., 1656-7.

21) 72 H.C. Deb., 1657.

22) 73 H.C. Deb., 20, 88, 68, 72, 75, 91, 109, etc. Sir Thomas Whittaker moved the rejection of the Bill on the express grounds that it opened the way for conscription; 73 H.C. Deb., 65-66; see also Contemp. Rev. 109:146.

23) 73 H.C. Deb., 109-110.

24) New States. 5:314-315.

25) Nation, 17:471.

affected to consider it a failure as a basis for conscription and saw in it "only a preliminary advertisement of conscription, a costly and time-wasting advertisement".²⁶

Mr Long combatted the fears of the anti-conscriptionists by contending that "this Bill leaves the question of compulsory service exactly where it is and where it has been; it does not affect it one way or the other. And I have the authority of Lord Kitchener for saying that it will materially assist the War Office to avoid taking men who ought not to be taken.... Because you have not got this information you are recovering men now from the colours in order that they may go back to the factories".²⁷ Mr Henderson, while making it clear that he did not regard the Bill as a prelude to compulsion, urged its need as a basis for a more effective application of the voluntary system, "because everybody knows that the more you draw upon the field by the voluntary system of enlistment the more difficult it ultimately must become". His report at the same time on the unsatisfactory results of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee's campaign constituted what the "Spectator" called an "unanswerable argument" in favor of the Bill.²⁸ The division on the second reading of the Bill showed 253 votes for the Government while 32 were cast against it. It is significant that of these 24 were by Liberals while but seven adverse votes were cast by the Labour members.

Had the National Registration Bill been handled in the Commons with the frankness with which it was discussed in the House of Lords, its fate might have been different. In presenting the bill in

26) Nation, 17:476.

27) 73 H.C. Deb., 59; for confirmation of this see also Lloyd George's statement on the same matter in introducing the Munitions of War Bill, 72 H.C. Deb., 1201-02.

28) 73 H.C. Deb., 145-6; see also Spect. 115:34.

the upper house the Marquess of Lansdowne took occasion to call attention to the fact that one-third of the army of three million men in the field were married men, a condition due to "the old go-as-you-please system" which he asserted had broken down because of its unequal incidence.²⁹ While he saw no step toward immediate compulsion foreshadowed in the Bill, he frankly admitted that "this Bill does bring us nearer to compulsory service. If compulsory service ever comes this Register will beyond question assist us in introducing it, because it will shorten the interval which would have to elapse between our decision to resort to compulsion and the actual application of that measure".³⁰ In thus characterizing the measure, Lord Lansdowne not only forecast the use to which it would be put but he admitted, as a member of the Government, the unfairness of the voluntary system.³¹ The Bill was read a third time without a division and was enacted into law July 15.³²

From the date of its enactment the function of the National Register as a means of compiling an industrial census was lost sight of. Its fate, as a measure of this sort, was more and more involved with the more pressing problem of raising men for the military and not for the industrial forces of the kingdom. The situation on the continent during the summer of 1915 was particularly disquieting. In May Italy had declared war; in June and July the Russian retreat had continued; the uncertain attitude of Bulgaria promised to add a new area for Allied arms; and there was slowly dawning on the Government a sense of the costly failure at the Dardanelles. The struggle

29) 19 H.L. Deb., 386-7; 389.

30) 19 H.L. Deb., 394.

31) See Sat. Rev. 120:50.

32) 5 & 6 George V, c. 60; the Bill was not compulsory in Ireland; its application there was left to the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant.

on the western front had also been especially bloody and again the cry went up for "men and still more men". The new demand was foreshadowed by Lord Kitchener in a speech at the Guildhall on July 9, while National Registration was still before Parliament. The real nature of the Bill, to the minds of the military authorities, at least, was made clear in Lord Kitchener's reference to it as a means by which "we shall be able to note the men between 19 and 40 available for the fighting line....with a view to approaching each" as to his enlistment.³³ On the same day Lord Derby had branded the voluntary system as unfair and Lord Curzon had voiced a vigorous demand for national service.³⁴

The utterances of those favoring national service were sufficiently clear and unmistakable to warrant the belief that the National Register was a victory for their program, perhaps not a complete victory, but at any rate a step in what they considered the right direction.³⁵ During the early days of the Coalition Cabinet the National Service League felt compelled, for political reasons, to preserve silence as to their program. At its annual meeting, on June 18, under the presidency of Lord Milner, a discussion turning on universal training took place, but the League refused to take positive action in the way of propaganda out of an alleged desire not to embarrass the newly-formed Government.³⁶ Probably the more likely reason was a fear of jeopardizing the fate of the National Registration Bill, then about to be introduced.³⁷ The rather large Liberal opposition to the Bill might have been dangerously increased in the face

³³) Times, July 10, p.8.

³⁴) Times, July 10, p.8.

³⁵) Times, Aug. 16; Sat. Rev. 120:25; Times Hist. War, 5:317-8; Nelson's Hist. War, 8:118.

³⁶) Times, June 19, p.7; Spect. 114:835.

³⁷) Nelson's Hist. War, 8:114-115.

of unwise agitation.³⁸

Now that the National Registration Act was on the statute book those favoring compulsion could press their arguments even to the point of embarrassing a Government which at no time enjoyed great popularity in political circles. This renewed agitation for compulsory service took many forms and came from various sources. On August 16 the National Service League issued a manifesto in the "Times", addressed to the country and not to the Government, from a desire, they said, not to embarrass the latter. In this they expressed the belief that the people were ready to make any sacrifice and that all able-bodied men should serve with the colours.³⁹ In the same issue the "Times" demanded "a plain declaration from the Government as to the uses to which the National Register will be applied. there must be an end of half-measures on the part of the War Office. The Government has a register and must come to an honest decision on the merits of the case."⁴⁰

Within a week the National Service League plan grew more ambitious, and on August 20 announced its demand for National Service "not merely for home defense but for universal and compulsory military service for the duration of the war!" A vigorous campaign of publicity was immediately inaugurated and the funds of the League opened for subscriptions which were led off by Lord Northcliffe and Sir Alfred Mond, each with a hundred pounds. A meeting for women only was called for September 3 at Queen's Hall; the columns of the "Times" were filled with letters and signed articles calling for national service or conscription and its editorial policy grew more

38) See above p.35.

39) Times, Aug, 16, p.7.

40) Ibid.

peremptory than ever in its tone.⁴¹ The decisive importance of this National Service campaign is best shown perhaps by the attitude of its opponents. Circumstances were so working together as to marshal upon its side the stronger arguments.

The movement early gained such impetus as to throw genuine alarm into the ranks of those striving to prolong the life of the voluntary system. They could urge with truth that the ministry had not yet spoken in favor of conscription, but even this argument lost force when, on September 3, Mr Lloyd George himself declared: "If the nation hesitates when the need is clear to call forth its manhood to defend honor and existence...then I can see no hope".⁴² The Minister of Munitions, on this occasion, was speaking with the Russian collapse especially in mind and, while not necessarily restricted to the one interpretation, his statement was at any rate so received. Two days later his view of the Russian situation was contradicted in Lord Kitchener's statement in the House of Lords ⁴³ but the almost simultaneous appearance of Mr Lloyd George's famous "Preface" to his collected speeches gave wide publicity to his change of front.

There were no doubt reasons for Lord Kitchener's optimistic view of the military situation in Russia which, strictly speaking, were not operative in the case of Mr Lloyd George, but the word of the Secretary for War had greater weight in the ranks of the anti-conscriptionists among whom the Minister of Munitions was being slowly discredited.⁴⁴ It mattered little to the anti-conscriptionists

41) Times, Aug. 20-31; Sept. 2, 3.

42) New States. 5:553-4.

43) 19 H.L. Deb., 812-813.

44) Nation, 17:790-1; New States. 5:553. See also article by W. Llewelyn Williams, M.P. in Contemp. Rev. 109:146-48, in which the writer asserts "the names of Lord Northcliffe, the Napoleon of the new Toryism and of Mr Lloyd George, the chief leader of the British democracy were linked together".

that more than two months ago Mr Lloyd George had shown himself a conscriptionist in theory.⁴⁵ The coincidence of his conversion or "apostasy" with the campaign of the National Service League was sufficient to call forth from the adherents of voluntarism a perfect storm of reproachful protest which betrayed by its untempered vehemence the despair which prompted it.⁴⁶ Nevertheless the position of Mr Lloyd George was made safe only by the general abnormal state of public affairs. Ordinarily his outspoken convictions as to the urgency of the situation would have involved his retirement from the Government.

As it was, however, the steady drift of public opinion was in the direction of a more vigorous recruiting policy. Two months of dealing with the Russian retreat and the ineffectual battering at the Dardanelles had served to dampen the optimism of the most hopeful and to stimulate the feeling that something more must be done. Mr Lloyd George had claimed for himself the right to sound public opinion on conscription and, although this idea was scouted in some quarters we are forced to admit the favorable nature of the response.⁴⁷ The use of Lord Kitchener's dictum concerning Russia as a means of thwarting the Minister of Munitions was really a weakness in the arguments against National Service, for in the same speech the Secretary for War had said: "The provisions to keep their (the armies') strength in 1916 has caused me anxious thought which has been accentuated and rendered more pressing by the recent falling off in the numbers coming forward to enlist although every ef-

45) "Pray don't talk about it as if it were anti-democratic. We won and saved our liberties in this land on more than one occasion by compulsory service". From his speech at Manchester, June 3. See Sat.Rev.119:566; Nation,17:305; Spect.114:799.

46) Nation,17:788,790,792.

47) Ibid.,17:819.

fort has been made to obtain our requirement under the present system.⁴⁸ The issue was plainly before the public. It remained to be seen how the Government would react to the state of popular feeling.

Out and out compulsion had long been agitated in Parliament but never with the vigor which characterized its arguments in the late summer of 1915. As early as June 9, it had been pointed out by Lord Joicey that the Government had been forced to raise the age limits for recruits from 35 to 40 to meet the call for three hundred thousand sent out from the War Office in May, and urged that that some measure ought to be taken to compel the younger men "to recognize the duty they owe to the state".⁴⁹ Again, a few days later, Lord Devonport pointed out that approximately one-third of the men then under arms were married men, a condition which made necessary an outlay for separation allowances sixty thousand pounds per week in excess of the sum necessary were the proportion of married and single men kept more nearly normal by enlistments among the younger men.⁵⁰ Lord Kitchener, in his speech at the Guildhall on July 9, had flatly said that he preferred a campaign based upon the information contained in the National Register to the "rhetoric and posters" of the voluntary system.⁵¹ In his address to the meeting of women at Queen's Hall on September 3, Mr Ellis P. Griffith, member for Anglesey, had declared: "If I had to choose between discussing National Service in perfect freedom or accepting voluntaryism in compulsory silence, I would choose the former. We no longer have voluntaryism. We are standing midway in a position of compromise. We have left voluntaryism on the one

48) 19 H.L. Deb., 816-817.

49) 19 H.L. Deb., 28; see also Spect. 115:770.

50) 19 H.L. Deb., 551, 389; Sat. Rev. 120:75.

51) Times, July 10, p. 8

side and we have not the courage to grasp national service on the other".⁵²

The agitation thus precipitated for compulsion provoked a perfect avalanche of criticism from the voluntaristic press. In its issue of August 21, the "New Statesman" thus stated its view: "The real arguments for and against compulsion are hidden in the archives of Cabinet and in the multitudinous files of the National Register. One day they will be made public; but that day may not come before the end of the war. If it comes earlier, the case for the maintenance of the voluntary system may be overwhelmed by hard facts but on general grounds it is very strong".⁵³ On the same date the "Nation" carried in its columns a scathing diatribe directed against Lord Northcliffe and the "cabal" operating within the Coalition Cabinet;⁵⁴ a week later the same journal accused the conscriptionists of plotting the destruction of the Government and branded the scheme as insanity and not policy.⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that in the same article the writer touched upon a weakness of the plan which was later to be only too apparent, when he asserted that "they have already announced so many exemptions that they would find in the end very little to conscript!"

Running through all this criticism both of the National Register and the National Service program was the argument that more use might profitably be made of the existing voluntary agencies, in raising not only new armies but also more industrial workers. The passage of the National Registration Bill nullified this argument which, moreover, does not seem to have evoked any great response from the people at large. The great significance of the National Register

52) Times, Sept. 4, p. 7; Contemp. Rev. 109:146-7.

53) New States. 5:461.

54) Nation, 17:667.

55) Ibid., 17:694.

as the forerunner of conscription is in no way better shown than by the acquiescence of even its severest critics in regarding it as a basis for supplying information to be used for creating new armies. Whatever the original intention of its framers, the experiences and the discussions of the summer of 1915 had served to make any other interpretation a strained one. The campaign of publicity by the National Service League, significantly enough, opened the Monday following Registration Day. It comprehended the whole kingdom and brought its plan to many who were unreached by the printed appeals of the journals issued from London. It was a meaningful, new message even if presented in ways to which the Englishman for a year had been accustomed. Very plainly such a program could not be confined to the public alone. Sooner or later what any large or important portion of the people come to consider necessary or worth while must command the attention, willing or otherwise, of their legal representatives. When the demand for national service was first determinedly voiced in Parliament, National Registration as an industrial census became a dead letter.

Chapter Four. Lord Derby's Recruiting Scheme.

The removal of the recruiting question from the hands of popular, though unofficial, propagandists, to the halls of Parliament, marks the transition which was to end only with universal conscription. To say this is not to disparage the part played by those who called for national service through the press and in public appeals from the platform. It is perhaps not saying too much to assert that the Government followed, and did not lead, public opinion in its final declaration for compulsion. The comparative smoothness and absence of popular objection with which England accepted complete conscription point to this fact. The struggle in Parliament, though short and at no time really doubtful, was prefaced by events in the late summer of 1915 whose importance can scarcely be overestimated. It is unnecessary either to condemn or to attempt to justify the campaign of the National Service League to see clearly its value as an agency for preparing the country for a radical departure from the old methods. The growing criticism from the conscriptionist press during these days has little value for us; but the conversion of that portion of the press which had long been sceptical is highly significant.

During the silence of the Government throughout the early days of the National Service League campaign the public was slowly being taught the seriousness of the situation and the inadequacy of the effort hitherto made to meet it. Men differed upon the question of the nature of the remedy but it was plain to all that what had been done was insufficient and that what remained to be done, by whatever method, must be accomplished with greater vigor. The Government had begun in a small way to conscript wealth and had taken

steps to enrol labour by compulsory methods. It was an easy and plausible argument to assert that compulsion had begun at the wrong end. On the other hand, many could still support the voluntary system with forceful arguments. Those who saw the pink forms of the National Register used as a basis for raising new armies scented a plot of the conscriptionists and claimed, not without reason, that their system was not being given a fair trial. Moreover, the spectre of national disunion, following upon the introduction of conscription, still stalked before many. All the agitation had the effect of placing the issue fairly before the public and it had not long to wait before appearing in Parliament.

On September 15 Lord Kitchener had spoken of the serious falling off in recruits.¹ In the lower house on the same day the demand for conscription was first definitely voiced with a vigor and in terms which could not be silenced. In the session of that day attention was once more called to the disproportionate number of married men enlisting, while the unfair features of the voluntary system were mercilessly exposed. The leading speech on this occasion was made by a Liberal member, Captain Guest, whose indictment of the voluntary system deserves quoting, so aptly did it express a current of feeling which was growing in its intensity. "The system we have adopted", he said, "has some features in it a great deal more disagreeable than you find in the other system... Our system of advertising is almost too humiliating to discuss. It is undignified and it has proved unsuccessful... The opposition to compulsory registration would have been considerably greater than it was if the statement had not been made from the Front Bench to the

1) 19 H.L. Deb., 816-817.

effect that there was no intention of employing it for ulterior purposes. If that statement were true why were the pink forms being employed?...We have been deliberately deceiving ourselves. We are using the machinery of compulsion under the cloak of voluntarism. The highest and lowest instincts of the people have been appealed to with a complete disregard of justice and fair play".² A month previously the same charges had been published by another member of Parliament, Sir Leo Chiozza-Money, who had charged that "we have condescended to print posters which amount to jeers and taunts at the unenlisted, addressed to them through the medium of their womenkind. ...We have been for too long accustomed to leave things to chance to learn suddenly that happy-go-lucky methods are apt to bring disaster when they are put to the hazard against science and organization".³

On September 28 Captain Guest asked the Prime Minister from his seat in the Commons "whether he could make any statement with regard to recruiting or national service on or before Tuesday next". (October 5). The Prime Minister replied that the matter was receiving the attention of the Government and that a considered policy would be announced as soon as possible. At the same time he addressed an appeal to the House to abstain from agitating the question in the meantime, giving it as his opinion "that no greater disservice could be rendered to the country and to the allied cause than that at such a moment as this there should be a suggestion go forth to the world that there is any division of opinion amongst us".⁴ These

2) 74 H.C. Deb., 91-92.

3) Fortn. Rev. 98:367, 376. See also remarks of Colonel Lee in 74 H.C. deb., 176.

4) 74 H.C. Deb., 733.

words of Mr Asquith at this juncture of affairs were significant. There is no doubt he was justified in his appeal in view of the important conference held that day between himself and Lord Kitchener on the one hand and the representatives of Labour on the other. But his speaking of possible divisions in the government counsels was an admission of sufficient importance to foreshadow some impending change of policy.

In spite of the Prime Minister's appeal, Captain Guest took the floor and, in an eloquent speech, endeavoured to show that the inevitable wastage of war was not being repaired by the voluntary system and that the Government would have to produce at least 20,000 recruits a week or voluntarism would have failed. He closed his remarks with a fervent appeal for national service.⁵ The "Nation" disgustfully spoke of this speech as an "unpleasant revival of the spirit of undisciplined intrigue which lies behind the conscriptionist movement,"⁶ and by a clever manipulation of the figures used by Captain Guest, arrived at the conclusion that 5000 to 8000 recruits a week would supply the needs of the army for the next year, characterizing the 30000 recruits asked for by the Labour leaders as "almost wildly in excess of the need".⁷ This argument was specious in view of the recruiting experience of the past fourteen months, yet it shows with what tenacity the pacifist press clung to its demands. The words of the National Service men in Parliament gained additional force by the change in the military situation on the continent. On September 20 the mobilization of the Bulgarian army was ordered. Immediately came the call for Allied troops and, at the request of M. Venizelos, the Greek Premier, 150,000 French and British troops

5) 74 H.C. Deb., 766, 774.

6) Nation, 18:3.

7) Nation, 18:40; also letter of explanation from the "Nation" to the Times in the issue of the "Times" for Oct. 25, p. 9.

were dispatched to the Macedonian front where they were landed on October 2.⁸

In spite of this fact, however, the anti-conscriptionists would appear to have grounds for the stand which they so persistently took. On September 8 the annual Trade Union Congress, held at Bristol, had voted against compulsion. The demand for conscription set on foot by the National Service League and so insistently called for by the Northcliffe press had served to arouse opposition among the members of organized labour. By an almost solid vote, the Bristol Congress, representing the nearly three million trade unionists of Great Britain, declared its belief in the justice of the Allied cause, but by as large a vote voiced its opposition to the "propaganda for conscription being carried forward by a certain section of the press".⁹ The fear of industrial conscription seems still to have agitated Labour, for the statement of Mr Lloyd George--who was present for one session of the Congress--that 714 establishments were then under government control, does not seem to have affected the vote.¹⁰

It is difficult to estimate the importance of such action by organized labour. How far the Trade Unions represent the real sentiment of labour at large is itself a mooted question. Still more problematical is the question as to how exactly such a vote, carried out by the so-called "card system", represented the voters comprising the union. In many cases considerable sections of labour had repudiated such votes, while in others, action of Labour leaders had been

8) 75 H.C. Deb., 516-517.

9) Times, Sept. 9, p. 7; Nation, 17:545. The "Times", while recording the vote of loyalty, does not print the resolution against conscription.

10) See editorial comment in Sat. Rev. 120:245.

followed by sullen resentment on the part of the workers towards concerted programs between their leaders and the Government.¹¹ It is perhaps safe to say that the opposition of labour thus voiced is more apt to be magnified than underestimated. The action of the Labour leaders in Parliament, which in any case must be taken as official, was quite generally on the side of the Ministry. Such votes as that taken at Bristol probably at no time gave rise to more than momentary disquietude on the part of Government leaders. This is not to say that Labour played no part officially in England's conduct of the war. As time went on clear-sighted statesmen were forced to take notice of it and its significance grew tremendously with the increasing pressure of events.

The day on which Captain Guest disregarded the Prime Minister's appeal for cessation of agitation on the subject of national service was marked by the beginning of a new and unique recruiting effort. Up to this point no figures had been given out regarding recruiting progress and the exact situation was largely a matter for conjecture. From statements made in the House of Commons it was understood that close to three million men were under arms but it was also unofficially reported that grave deficiencies existed in units being recruited for service. At any rate, Lord Kitchener's statement of September 15 had emphasized anew the need for men. Almost, if not quite, without warning it was announced that an important conference had taken place on September 28 between representatives of Labour and leaders of the Government. A joint conference of Labour organizations, presided over by Mr Arthur Henderson, had invited

11) See the case of the bye-election of Mr C.B. Stanton, member for Merthyr Boroughs, who was returned in November 1915 by a majority of 4200 over the official Labour candidate; Times Hist. War, 7:126-7; also, on the other side, the strike of 200,000 Welsh coal miners in July is a case in point. Nelson's Hist. War, 8:126-128.

the attendance of Mr Asquith and Lord Kitchener to speak on the military situation. The proceedings were private but it was later given out that the conference had pledged itself "to assist the Government in every possible way to secure men for the army, navy and in munitions works".¹²

For this purpose the conference decided to organize a special Labour recruiting campaign throughout the country. The first step was taken on Saturday, October 2, when a monster recruiting rally was held in London, with processions, speechmaking and all the features which up to this time had characterized voluntary efforts. There was unanimity in considering the results of the rally as somewhat meager, but some difference of opinion as to the reasons for its failure. The weather had been unfavourable for such demonstrations and some attributed the poor results to this fact. However, it seems rather far-fetched to put forward such an explanation.¹³ It is probably nearer the truth to say that the old methods were failing after more than a year of unvaried use. In the early days of the war it had been possible to succeed in the face of conditions fully as adverse, and in October 1915 there was certainly cause enough for stimulation of national effort. Mr Lloyd George's prediction of the Russian collapse had been verified by the event and, generally speaking, the situation in Europe was no brighter than in the days when the thundering of German artillery before Antwerp had brought a rush of Englishmen to the recruiting stations. Whatever change might be made in methods it was plain to all that the old system was obsolete and inadequate to meet the demand.¹⁴ While the attempt was frowned

12) Times, Sept. 29, p. 9.

13) Sat. Rev. 120:434.

14) New States. 6:2; Times, Oct. 4, p. 5; Contemp. Rev. 109:148.

upon as an uncalled for effort to justify the voluntary system and unwarranted in its spirit by past experience, there can be little question that, as a matter of fact, voluntary recruiting was from that day on trial.

The problem of recruiting passed into a new phase with the appointment of the Earl of Derby as Director of Recruiting on October 5.¹⁵ Whether his choice grew out of the conference of September 28 it is impossible to say, but it is certain that his own prominence marked him out as specially fitted for the work to be undertaken. Personally, Lord Derby combined many of the qualities so highly prized and sincerely respected by the rank and file of Englishmen. To zeal as a sportsman he added a geniality of manner and a certain heartiness which had hitherto been valuable in recruiting, and were now to serve as an efficient drawing-card in the work under his direction. Although himself an advocate of national service, he had cooperated enthusiastically with Lord Kitchener in his attempts at voluntary recruiting. Beyond question his work in raising men was more successful than that of any other civilian in the kingdom. His acquaintance and popularity in the populous industrial centers of the north had made it possible for him to recruit men "not in regiments and battalions, but in army corps". As Director-General of Recruiting Lord Derby received no pay and assumed no military rank, it being the design of the War Office to place the conduct of the campaign entirely in the hands of civilian workers. In his new post he had no ministerial responsibility and worked in conjunction with the War Office directly under the Secretary for War.¹⁶ In making such dispositions the sponsors of the Derby scheme were able to

15) Times, Oct. 6, p. 8.

16) 74 H.C. Deb., 1592.

divest the effort of every aspect direct and official Government participation, and give it the appearance, at first, at least, of a purely popular endeavour. In this feature the Government may be said to have played its part well. Outside of the so-called "pledge" of the Prime Minister, made during his general remarks on the military situation in the Commons on November 2, surprisingly little mention was made of the Derby scheme in Parliament until its results were discussed during the debate on the first conscription bill early in January 1916.

A general "truce" was declared between the advocates and opponents of compulsion during the campaign, which neither succeeded in keeping very religiously.¹⁷ Enough had been said already, however, by National Service followers, to prejudice their position and verify the prediction of the "Saturday Review" that attempts to discourage the scheme would give "Radicals and Socialists and their papers" every reason to urge "that the scheme was not given a fair chance".¹⁸ In consideration of this fact, that the old feud of conscriptionists and voluntarists which still went on, we can not afford to be too dogmatic about the nature of the Derby scheme. It was a popular voluntary effort in that enlistment under it seems to have been little affected by the bickerings of the contending factions. But it was, as the event showed, a step towards conscription in that neither side showed any disposition to consider it the final effort of recruiting.

In accepting his new post Lord Derby let it be known that in his opinion the scheme was to be the last stand of the voluntary

17) See "Times" for notice of the anti-conscription manifesto issued by a committee of members of Parliament, Oct, 26, p.9, with comment; also New States.6:148; Sat.Rev.120:434.

18) Sat.Rev.120:386; New.States.6:51.

system. He spoke of himself as being in the position of a receiver of a bankrupt concern and stated frankly his belief that if this rally failed the voluntary system itself would have failed.¹⁹ At once, very naturally, there arose a protest against such a view. Not only those flatly and irrevocably opposed to conscription joined in this but also many who had shown themselves still open to conviction on the merits of the case. Discussion of the real merits of the Derby scheme must, however, remain in abeyance until we come to consider the actual numerical results of the canvass. It is sufficient to remark here that Lord Derby's own statement was extremely influential in producing the opinion that two schools of thought were involved in a conflict for supremacy, and even organs of the opposition found themselves unconsciously betrayed into echoing his initial utterance.

Following the announcement of Lord Derby's appointment the War Office issued a notice stating that, while classification and checking of the pink forms of the National Register were to continue, no canvassing was to be undertaken until the completion of Lord Derby's plans. In the same issue of the "Times" was published an appeal signed by leaders of Labour organizations urging the need of 30,000 recruits a week and pledging continued confidence in the efforts of the Government. It must be remembered in this connection, as was pointed out later in the House of Commons, that Lord Derby's plan laboured under an enormous handicap from the beginning. Thirty thousand recruits a week were required for the needs of the army and this flow of men had steadily decreased through the late summer. Therefore the new scheme, in order to justify the claims made for the voluntary system, must not only increase the supply of men necessary to keep

19) Times, Oct. 6, p. 8; Sat. Rev. 120:339.

up the strength of the armies in the field, but must also fill the cadres of the forces in training and produce a large reserve force at the disposal of the War Office.²⁰ Nevertheless, the Derby campaign began with a burst of enthusiasm which augured well for its success. After several conferences with leading representatives of Labour, Lord Derby was able to announce his plan.

The entire machinery of the rally was to be in the hands of civilians. Therefore, the chief responsibility, as Lord Derby explained would rest with the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee and the Joint Labour Recruiting Committee. In every area a local committee, whether already existing or to be formed, would undertake the work of canvassing, availing itself of the services of the political agents of all parties. For this purpose use was made of men above military age or unfit for service, of women, and, in some cases, of returned discharged soldiers--all chosen by the local sub-committee. The use of town halls, municipal offices and similar useful buildings was secured as canvassing headquarters. Canvassing was to be carried out upon the basis of the figures supplied by the National Register. As will be recalled, the National Registration Bill provided for the tentative exemption of men engaged in occupations indispensable to the production of war material by a process known as "starring" under which men so employed were set aside in a class by themselves and urged to remain at work instead of enlisting. The chief effort of the Derby scheme was to be directed towards the unlisted "unstarred" men on the files of the Register. Now the number of the "starred" and "unstarred" men was not a constant factor. Although it is not a matter which admits of proof, it seems that the starred trades, with the privilege of exemption attached to them, proved a tremendous drawing-card

for the unmilitant. The rather hap-hazard treatment of "starred" registrants resulted in serious difficulties at a later stage and even during the course of the Derby campaign these were beginning to appear. However, considering such obvious disadvantages, the new rally could not be called a failure in this regard.

The plan here was to send a letter to each "unstarred" unenlisted man with a direct appeal to come forward and enlist under the new plan. This was decided upon with the design that those who were waiting to be "fetched" might no longer protest that they had not been faced with the question. Lord Derby's letter to the unstarred men lacked nothing in directness. "If this effort does not succeed," he wrote, "the country knows that everything possible will have been done to make the voluntary system a success and will have to decide by what method sufficient recruits can be obtained to maintain our army in the field at their required strength".²¹ Whatever the critics may have said, this statement from the director of the scheme was enough to settle its character.

Following the circulation of the personal letters came the work of the canvassers. Men were urged to enlist at once, to enter Section B of the Army Reserve or to promise to join at a future date. All the men of the United Kingdom (Ireland was excluded) between the ages of 18 and 41 were divided into two groups--the married and the single. Each of these groups was in turn subdivided into 23, one for each age between the limits. No one, though registered, was to be ordered up for service before reaching the age of 19, and, under the Prime Minister's pledge, single men were to be taken before the married. It will be seen from this division into groups that a recruit had the option either of joining the army at once or of joining

²¹) Times Hist. War, 6:319.

a group appropriate to his age and condition, whether married or single. In the latter case, he was simply attested, received the sum of 2s.9d. for his one day's "service", and returned to his civil occupation as a member of Section B of the Army Reserve, to be called up at a fortnight's notice as required in the order of the groups. Local tribunals of civilians were to decide whether a man could rightly claim exemption and whether his claim to be transferred to a later group should be allowed.²² To these were added appeal tribunals, of which one member was to be an army officer, to pass upon cases carried up from the local tribunals. It was provided, however, that in no case was classification to be deferred more than ten groups.²³

With the broad outlines of his scheme arranged, Lord Derby was at last able to launch his campaign. The work of canvassing began October 23 with a burst of enthusiasm. The personal popularity of the leader and the spirit of fairness which characterized his effort, coupled with an apparent disposition on all hands to see a fair trial, promised success at first. One difficulty arose, however, which was destined to cause an early break in the "honorable truce" between voluntaryists and conscriptionists. This grew out of the fact that no one seemed willing to accept any but his own figures as a criterion of success. The action of the Government in withholding recruiting figures made it impossible to know with any degree of certainty the remaining resources in men. For this reason no definite goal had been set for Lord Derby. Men were needed more quickly than ordinary methods had been able to supply them. This new and

22) Times, Nov. 5, p. 9; Nov. 16, p. 5.

23) Accounts of the working of the Derby scheme may be found in Times Hist. War, 6:306-320; Nelson's Hist. War, 12:147-153; Statesman's Yearbook, 1916, Introduction, xxxv-xxxvi.

extraordinary effort was designed to raise all the men possible. No doubt setting a limit would have been a mistake well calculated to disjoint utterly all future attempts at recruiting and reproduce the state of affairs which caused men to believe that the first hundred thousand were the sum of the Government's needs.

But if the Government had not set a goal, there were many partisans of conscription who were willing to do so. The assertion by National Service men that Lord Derby's scheme should net two or three million men struck the opposition as being wildly extravagant and as a deliberate attempt to prejudice the issue. Such differences could have no effect but to lead to editorial reprisals.²⁴ Long before it was possible to get at actual figures, such controversies continued with no more profitable result than to set the stage for the struggle precipitated by the final official report of the canvass. During the first week, while the campaign was getting under way, results appear to have been fairly satisfactory, though the rate of enlistment increased very greatly in the following weeks. As in the days of voluntary enlistment married men continued to come forward in disproportionate numbers.²⁵ As soon as this fact became known it was made the object of criticism and was eventually brought to the attention of the Government. The married men themselves felt the difficulty of their position and not unnaturally sought enlightenment²⁶

The explanation of the position of the married men took the form of the Prime Minister's pledge. No single utterance, official or

24) See e.g. New States. 6:50.

25) It is impossible to record comparative figures on this point except as they relate to the final report, since periodical reports were not issued.

26) See a letter of Mr H.J. Mackinder in the "Times", Nov. 2, p. 9, pointing out the distinction between married men and single men under the Derby scheme.

unofficial, during the whole history of the recruiting problem, called forth anything like the controversy occasioned by the pledge. Upon its interpretation and acceptance turned the whole subsequent action of the Government, though it is hard to see, with our advantage of perspective, why it should have produced such radical differences of opinion.

On November 2, Mr Asquith, in the course of an exhaustive review of the military situation, gave the first authoritative statement of the Cabinet's view of the recruiting question. First of all, he admitted that the Cabinet was not agreed upon the means needed to place recruiting on a satisfactory basis. While asserting that the voluntary system did very well in times of peace, he gave it as his opinion that "as hitherto practiced it operates in a hap-hazard, capricious, and, to some extent, unjust way with regard both to individuals and to classes". In spite of this fact, however, he was opposed to compulsion on grounds of expediency, feeling that the application of coercion would forfeit national unity, unless it met with something in the nature of "general consent". While anticipating satisfactory results from the Derby scheme, he made it clear that "if there shall still be found a substantial number of men of military age...who hold back...I believe it would force the country to the view that they must consent to supplement by some form of legal obligation the failure of the voluntary system. As far as I myself am concerned I should be prepared to recommend them to take that course". Following this statement of his position on compulsion, Mr Asquith took up the question of the status of the married men and gave his famous pledge: "So far as I am concerned, I should certainly say that the obligation of the married man to serve ought not to be enforced or held to be binding upon him unless

and until--I hope by voluntary effort, if it be needed, in the last resort, as I have explained, by other means--the unmarried men are dealt with".²⁷

In this review of the situation Mr Asquith had done two things. He had reduced the issue between voluntarism and compulsion from one of principle to one of simple expediency and had frankly described the Derby scheme as the final test of the merits of voluntary recruiting. In the second place, he had clearly and frankly spoken for compulsion in the event of the failure of the Derby scheme.²⁸

Such an interpretation, however, was either not possible or not welcome to those most concerned in discussing and criticizing it. The pledge seemed too much like the expression of a personal view and many were not ready to accept it as binding upon the Cabinet or Parliament.²⁹ In the country at large it is true that for a time it produced some confusion and caused a slump in enlistments which was not repaired until further statements from Mr Asquith made clearer the attitude of the Government.³⁰

On November 11 Lord Derby had issued a statement in which he announced that he had been authorized by the Prime Minister to "state definitely that if young men medically fit and not indispensable to any business of national importance....do not come forward voluntarily before November 30, the Government will, after that date, take the necessary steps to redeem the pledge made on November 2".³¹ The

27) 75 H.C. Deb., 521-524.

28) The "Times", however, would not go so far in a favorable interpretation of the Prime Minister's view; see issue of Nov. 3, p. 11; also Spect. 115:612.

29) 75 H.C. Deb., 1597; New States. 6:148; Nation, 18:525; and Nelson's Hist. War, 12:147-149.

30) Times, Nov. 19, pp. 9, 10.

31) Times, Nov. 12, p. 9.

uncertainty still persisted, however, and for some time Lord Derby was besieged with telegrams from local recruiting officials asking for full assurance as to the real intention of the Government.³²

It is hard to see how the Prime Minister's statement could be open to contradictory interpretations. In his pledge the expressions "voluntary effort" and "other means" had been placed in direct antithesis, and "other means", by no reasonable twist of meaning, could signify anything more or less than compulsion.³³ Yet there were many who saw, or affected to see, ambiguity in the term and openly charged Lord Derby with deliberate misinterpretation of its sense.³⁴ In the House of Commons, the statement issued by Lord Derby was characterized by Mr Whitehouse, Liberal member for Lanark, "as containing a futile and unnecessary threat, as a violation of the spirit of what the Prime Minister said on the same subject on the 2nd of November, as a menace to the unity of the nation and as a breach of the privileges of this House, which alone is entitled to issue any such statement should it so desire".³⁵ At last on November 20 there was published in the "Times" a letter from Mr Asquith to Lord Derby in which the former said that the letter of November 11 "correctly expresses the intention of the Government".³⁶ Although the matter did not cease to be discussed, for all practical purposes the letter of November 20 effectually deprived it of any harmful effect on recruiting.

By the date of the Prime Minister's pledge the new effort was well under way and most sanguine hopes for its success were

32) See "Times", Nov. 2-20, passim.

33) On this point see an illuminating article in XIXth Century, 79:31.

34) See New States, 6:148 and cf. statement of Mr Bonar Law in the House of Commons; Mr Law, when asked for his view of the statement of Lord Derby on November 11, took the same stand as that of Mr Asquith; 75 H.C. Deb., 1731; also Nation, 18:229.

35) 75 H.C. Deb., 1597; further 1633, 1700, 1705 etc.

36) Times, Nov. 20, p. 8.

indulged in all quarters, even in the midst of the advice and suggestions which are never so plentiful as on such occasions. Beginning with a slight increase in the numbers coming forward, the rate constantly grew until the promoters of the scheme caught the contagious enthusiasm and bent every effort to produce a huge gross total, such as would serve to vindicate the voluntary system. On November 8 it was announced that Lord Derby had arranged that all starred men on the National Register, might, if physically fit and of military age, be given an opportunity to enlist. At the same time he appealed to employers to allow starred men to attest and pass into the reserve.³⁷ It will be recalled that the first appeal was addressed to the unstarred men. Such an arrangement as that announced on November 8, if it met with success, would add greatly to the figures possible under a canvass of the unstarred men alone. New possibilities were opened when, on November 13, it was further announced that munitions workers, farmers and farm labourers might enlist conditionally and not be liable for service until the Minister of Munitions and the Board of Agriculture felt that they were needed more urgently at the front.³⁸ A week later the Local Government Board issued to the local tribunals lists of exempted occupations--the first definite ruling on this important matter. Men engaged in coal mining, the production and transportation of munitions, agriculture and railroading were included in the lists sent out.³⁹

At the same time, Lord Derby, after once more promising that absolute faith would be kept with the married men, announced that the completion of the scheme would be postponed from November 30 until

37) Times, Nov. 8, p. 5.

38) Ibid. Nov. 13, p. 9.

39) See complete list in Times, Nov. 22, p. 9.

December 4 and, since a week would be required for compiling the report, canvassing might proceed until December 11.⁴⁰ Just at this point appeared practically the only criticism of the scheme itself in the pages of the "New Statesman". Following the lead of Mr J.H. Thomas, Labour member for Derbyshire, who had during the week voiced his suspicions of the scheme as likely to usher in conscription,⁴¹ this journal expressed its dissatisfaction with the conduct of the new rally. "There is too much mystification about Lord Derby's campaign. When November 30 comes no one will be able to say whether the campaign has been successful or not, because no definition of success has been made... The whole business will presently be seen to have amounted to no more than an elaborate piece of organization and advertisement designed merely to stimulate recruiting and to get as large a number of men as possible at the disposal of the War Office. This attempt to rush the country into conscription on a side-issue---for that is all the distinction between married and unmarried men is--has failed like its predecessors... The time may come when it is necessary but it must be preceded by complete national organization"----a thing it dismissed as wildly impracticable six months before!⁴²

The "whole business" was an attempt to "stimulate recruiting" and to get "as many men as possible at the disposal of the War Office" and we find difficulty in reaching the point of view of the "New Statesman" in making such a petulant quasi-apology for Lord Derby's scheme. A criticism of it as indiscriminate in character comes nearer the point. The distinction between married and unmarried men was the entering wedge of conscription although it is unprofitable for us to call in question the good faith in which such a distinction was

40) Spect. 115:727.

42) New States. 6:171

41) 75 H.C. Deb., 1722, 1726.

created by the Prime Minister's pledge. However, the "New Statesman" soon fell back into line and found a grain of consolation in declaring in its next issue that "the difference between the numbers obtained under Lord Derby's scheme and the numbers obtainable by conscription seems likely to be reduced practically to the vanishing point".⁴³

Generally speaking, aside from the momentary flurry caused by the various interpretations of the pledge, the conclusion thus expressed by the "New Statesman" represents fairly enough the attitude towards the scheme in the last fortnight of its operation. During the last week of November the effort reached its height. Every effort was made to increase the gross total. Men from starred occupations enlisted, civil servants were invited to attest, the eyesight test for recruits was postponed until their groups should be called up.⁴⁴ The date for the completion of the scheme was pushed forward to the 12th of December. All comers were accepted for attestation and the rush to the recruiting during the first days of December resembled the stress during the first few weeks of the war. To use Lord Derby's words, the canvassers were completely "snowed under".⁴⁵ So great were the numbers at the eleventh hour that it was found impossible to attest all, and the groups were held open to the late-comers three days longer. A glance at Lord Derby's report will reveal the disproportionate results of the last four or five days when compared with those in the six weeks preceding.⁴⁶ Thus by December 15 the Derby effort had been made. Although there could be only rumor as to the numerical results of the canvass, the Government showed

43) New States.6:171

44) Nelson's Hist."ar,12:150.

45) Lord Derby's statement in the Lords, Dec.15; 20.H.L.Dec.,640.

46) See Appendix A.

its intention to get the men by the proclamation of December 18, calling up for service as from January 20 the second, third, fourth and fifth groups.⁴⁷ On December 21 Parliament voted an additional million troops to the armies in service.⁴⁸ At the same time it was announced that 1,250,000 were actually at the front, while a total of 3,000,000 were either in actual service or in training.⁴⁹

For the next fortnight the air was filled with rumours. It had been hoped that Lord Derby's report might be in the hands of Parliament before the holiday recess, but the Houses rose before it could be completed. All through the last half of December scepticism alternated with optimism and a tenseness was reflected from all quarters. It was felt generally that, if the Derby report was unsatisfactory from the standpoint of the number of unmarried men enlisted, the Government would be brought to action looking toward redeeming the Prime Minister's pledge. Such a course might have been confidently expected had it not been known that within the Cabinet itself there was a difference of opinion as to the advisability of bringing in compulsory legislation. In the midst of the conflicting rumours which filled the Parliamentary recess, Lord Derby's report was laid before the Cabinet.

The report showed that of 5,011,441 men of military age available, the gross number brought forward by the effort was 2,829,263. Of these 1,150,000 were single men and 1,679,263 married. The actual figures on the National Register showed the number of unmarried men

47) Group One, composed of men of 18, was not to be called until its members had reached 19.

48) 77 H.C. Deb., 213-214.

49) Votes had been as follows: Aug. 5, 1914--500,000; Sept. 9, 1914---500,000; Nov. 12, 1914--1,000,000; and now an additional 1,000,000. To these must be added the Expeditionary Force of 150,000, the Territorials and the Reserves. The figure 1250000 given above included contingents sent by the dominions.

available to be 2,179,231. Deducting the 1,150,000 single men attested would leave a gross total of 1,029,231 not accounted for. Of this total 378,071 were recorded as starred. This last number, subtracted from the 1,029,231 not accounted for, left a residue of 651,160 unstarred single men still unaccounted for. Presumably deductions could be made from this gross total only on the grounds of indispensability and physical unfitness. Subtracting, then, ten per cent. as indispensable and forty per cent. of the remainder as unfit, as was done with the other figures in the report, we arrive at 351,627 as the smallest estimate of unstarred single men failing to come forward. If it were decided by the Ministry that this residue, whatever it may actually have been, was no more than a "negligible minority", then it would be impossible to hold the married men to their attestation. Accepting Lord Derby's figures, this would mean taking the 343,386 available single men and releasing 487,676 married men, thus adding to the army only about 40 per cent. of the men made available by the great rally.

Here was the heart of the problem. To apply compulsion to the unmarried men, following the most likely interpretation of the pledge, was the only way of holding for service the larger number of married who had come forward. The solution of that problem lay with the Ministry who spent the last days of the year in analyzing the figures of the Derby report.

On December 28 was held the decisive meeting of the Ministry. A majority of the Ministers, all of whom were in attendance, agreed upon the following policy with regard to the recruiting question: First, that the Prime Minister's pledge was binding upon the Government as a whole. Second, that the pledge should be redeemed at once.

Third, that the principle of compulsion should be accepted. Fourth, that the Prime Minister should make an announcement to this effect immediately upon the reassembling of the House of Commons on January

4.50

The objections of three members of the Cabinet prevented unanimity of action. Mr McKenna, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had scruples from the point of view of national finances, in withdrawing any further large number of men from productive industry. The President of the Board of Trade, Mr Runciman, knowing the shortage of skilled labour, feared the effects of wholesale recruiting as a possible menace to the export trade which it was of the highest importance to maintain. Both of these objections grew out of very real difficulties. England, in a peculiarly vital sense, was the financial mainstay of the Allied cause. Her male population not yet in military service, was being employed to an increasing degree in needful industry; her mills and mines and factories ministered not only to her own needs but also to the demands of less favored allies; while her shipping facilities were burdened not only with the handling of peacetime business but also with supplying far-flung military enterprises. To disorganize these industries, which more than a year of readjustment had rendered efficient, would be too high a price to pay for what might after all end in producing but insignificant military advantages. On the other hand, the wholesale starring of industries must to a large extent have met the demands of the reluctant ministers.

Quite a different argument came from the Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, who based his opposition upon conscientious objection to compulsory service. The decision of the Ministry led to his resigna-

50) Times, Dec. 29, p. 9.

51) Nelson's Hist. War, 12:154.

tion and he afterwards led the opposition to conscription in the House of Commons. The other two ministers gave at least their tacit consent when the issue was brought forward,--Mr McKenna voting in favor of the first conscription measure, while Mr Runciman refrained from voting. In spite of these demurrers of expediency and principle Mr Asquith followed the majority and on January 5 introduced the Military Service Bill.

A word as to the real nature of the Derby scheme is perhaps not out of place here. In its conception and execution it was unique among recruiting efforts. Never in the days of the most impassioned sporadic appeals were commensurate results achieved. The readiness with which people generally fell in with the idea and the sustained and enthusiastic loyalty with which all classes responded to the call afford a truly marvelous view of the patriotic resources of the kingdom.

From the standpoint of numerical results, the scheme was a success after making liberal allowances for exemptions and rejections. In recruiting 830,000 men Lord Derby had, in ten weeks, produced nearly three times the number of men considered necessary to keep the ranks filled. In other words, for ten weeks he had overcome his initial handicap of 30,000 men per week and had added 53,000 to the reserves. Still more significant are the gross totals, which showed that nearly three million men had shown their willingness to serve by offering themselves for attestation.

On the other hand, the practical results of the scheme were seriously impaired and its intended nature changed by factors which it is easy to overlook. In the enthusiasm for huge gross totals the Derby groups had been opened to all comers. Men undoubtedly in the

class of indispensables were invited to attest and workers in vital branches of industry were accepted when it was evident that many of these must be returned to civil life. The question of exemptions arising from such lack of discrimination made the first conscription bill practically unworkable and finally pledged Britain to a policy of "thorough" such as was never dreamed of even by the most rabid conscriptionists.

Besides these more superficial aspects, it is no more than the truth to assert that even the Derby scheme had in it a generous leaven of moral compulsion. The Prime Minister's pledge, although doubtless made in all good faith, nevertheless created a distinction which seemed to the average man to constitute a conditional threat. The very feverishness of recruiting is an indication that many treated the scheme as a last chance to go before being "fetched". The event showed that the Derby scheme was the final effort of the voluntary system. But it was essentially so from the beginning, and its progress only emphasized the fact. The old system had broken down. The Derby scheme, by its striving after big results, made a return to voluntaryism impossible. It is without doubt true that the logic of events was stronger than Ministerial deliberation, and that the Derby scheme forced conscription into the hands of Parliament as the only means possible for gaining the results which the situation so insistently demanded.

Chapter Five. The Adoption of Conscription.

The debate on the Military Service Bill was one of the few occasions during the war when the center of interest was in the House of Commons. In its outcome every man eligible for military service was interested. Although introduced merely to bring in the reluctant single men, it was plain to all that the adoption of the principle of compulsion would weaken the arguments of the voluntaryists and make straight the way for more comprehensive measures. While it is possibly true, as one writer suggests, that the formation of the Coalition made easier the growth of compulsionist sentiment in the Cabinet, at the same time it undeniably made the passage of such legislation more difficult. The tendency towards centralization of administrative functions which has since had such a marvelous development, was even then visible. In introducing the bill for compulsion the Prime Minister decided for a course fraught with grave political dangers. Not only must he face a numerically formidable opposition on the grounds of principle and expediency; he must also reckon with a section of Parliament jealous of its rights from the legal and constitutional point of view. In addition, the possible opposition of Labour must be considered and, if necessary, conciliated. The political astuteness and tact called for by the circumstances were evidenced to a marked degree in the conduct of the measure through Parliament.

The avowed object of the Military Service Bill was to provide for the compulsory enlistment of single men and widowers without children, between the ages of 18 and 41, who had failed to offer themselves for attestation under the Derby scheme. This simply meant the redemption of the Prime Minister's pledge. It was the introduction of the smallest possible measure of compulsion. Although in the

first instance it affected only single men, it also held the married men to their attestation. This being the case, and assuming the burden of proof to lie with the Government, it remained to show three things: first, did redeeming the pledge demand compulsion? second, would compulsion, if applied, produce the necessary men? and, third, did military necessity warrant the application of compulsion?

In the first instance, the controversy flared out anew on the nature of the pledge, as soon as it was announced that the bill would be brought in. Interpretations were placed upon it which had apparently not occurred to its critics before conscription appeared as a possibility. "In the first place", said the "New Statesman", "the pladge was not a promise to introduce compulsion; it was a promise to refrain from calling up certain classes of eligible men until certain other classes have been enrolled. In the second place, it was a promise given to the married men and not a bargain with any group of conscriptionist publicists or politicians".¹ Mr Llewelyn Williams, writing during the debates on the Bill, said: "The distinction between married and single men which was set up was unreal and illogical; it does not obtain in any conscriptionist country; it is scoffed at by the conscriptionists themselves, though they are willing to benefit by it... The pledge has turned every attested married man--and especially the wife of every attested married man--into a conscriptionist, at least as far as unmarried men are concerned... The pledge planted advocates of conscription in every parish in the land. It became possible to introduce a compulsionist bill into the House of Commons.

No electioneering maneuver of our time or any time has met with such

1) New States. 6:292-3.

amazing success".² The "Nation" took the same ground and tried by every possible twist of the term to deprive the pledge of all semblance of its essential nature.

On the other hand, the bill found staunch supporters in the "Spectator", the "Saturday Review", and, of course, the "Times". "Mr Asquith has kept his pledge", said the Spectator, "in spirit as well as in letter... He gives us only as much compulsion as is necessary to carry out his pledge and compulsion only for 'the duration of the war'. Within these limits, however, it is real compulsion".³ The "Saturday Review" and the "Times", favoring conscription almost from the first, were consistent in interpreting the pledge as a justification for compulsion. Mr Asquith's own view was clearly expressed in his speech upon the introduction of the measure. "This bill", he said, "is confined to a specific purpose--the redemption of a promise publicly given by me in this House in the early days of the Derby campaign..... The group system is reopened and men can come in now under that system. I quite agree that that will be the simplest solution--but in the meantime we must make provision for the men whom parliament has voted and, above all, we must keep our promise".⁴ In the same speech the Prime Minister again asserted his opposition to conscription and hoped that the limited compulsion provided by the bill might yet prove a dead letter after the reopening of the Derby groups.

As soon as the Cabinet decision was known, opponents of compulsion began the work of whittling down the numbers possible under

2) Quoted from the second of two articles appearing in the February 1916 number of the Contemporary Review. The first, by Mr Ellis P. Griffith, M.P. for Anglesey, sets forth the arguments favoring the bill, while the one from which the excerpt is taken was written by Mr. W. Llewelyn Williams, member for Carmarthen; vol. 109, pp. 137-153.

3) Spect. 116:36.

4) 77 H.C. Deb., 961.

the terms of the bill. The presence of many figures which were frankly only estimates in the Derby report offered a weakness which they were not slow to seize upon. Even though 650,000 might not be a "negligible minority" it was easy by arguments and manipulation to make it so. By deducting ten per cent. here and twenty per cent. there for apparently sufficient reasons it was not difficult to reduce 650,000 to a ridiculously small remainder. Granting the accuracy of the arithmetic conviction was easily secured. By branding the figures of Lord Derby as uncertain or unknown to begin with, the rest was easy. It was but a natural and logical step from this to the view that the bill would be barren of results. These tactics, a mixture of statements of fact and pleas of principle, formed the core of the opposition, both in Parliament and the press.⁵

It was perhaps not so difficult to justify the bill on the grounds of military necessity. On December 21 Parliament had voted an additional million men. During the operation of the Derby scheme the old recruiting channels had been closed. Some 275,000 men had enlisted for immediate service but there was no assurance that this number would be increased by more than the 340,000 single men unless the bill should pass. In fact, all depended upon the fate of the measure then before Parliament. As was pointed out above, it is extremely doubtful whether the voluntary system would have been able to recover its former position, so great a change had been wrought in the temper of the people by the stupendous effort of the Derby scheme.

5) "...with the Derby scheme we have already exhausted by voluntary means ninety per cent. of our total military resources; so that compulsion can add almost nothing to our forces... We are to be robbed of our triumph under the voluntary system for the sake of what promises to be no more than a mere handful of men. The five per cent. of conscripts will make the victorious British army a conscript army for the world". New States. 6:289.

And, in the meantime, there was no cheering news from the theatres of the war. The constant drain of men went on without abatement. The only authoritative opinion on this point came from Lord Kitchener on the day of the introduction of the bill. "We are now asking Parliament to sanction a change, as it has been proved that, in the special circumstances of this utterly unprecedented struggle, the existing system without modification is not equal to maintaining the army which is needed to secure victory".⁶ If the Government made no very decided attempt to justify the bill on the grounds of military necessity, it must be attributed to the rather mild nature of its compulsion. There can be no doubt that the needs of the situation were admitted by the majority of Englishmen.

The leader of the opposition in the Commons was Sir John Simon, late Home Secretary. While standing against compulsion on grounds of principle, Sir John bent every effort on the first reading of the bill to show the very meager results obtainable by its adoption. To do this meant paring down the 650,000 unstarred unenlisted single men to a number which might fairly be called a "negligible minority". His first duty, then, was to discredit the figure 650,000 itself. "What is the figure of 650,000?" he asked. "It is arrived at by subtracting two figures, the one from the other, which are themselves arrived at by different methods, for different purposes, by different persons and at different times". From this he went on to show that the National Register contained all clergymen and priests, members of the mercantile marine in England on August 15, 1915, men since recruited, men leaving the country since then and the last sons of families still at home. "When you have excluded these large blocks

6) 20 H.L. Deb., 816.

of several classes from the National Register, who is there that dares to say that the figure which is left is going to be more than a 'negligible minority'?"⁷ Mr Hobhouse made his acceptance of the bill conditional upon assurances that it was not to be a preliminary to a permanent measure and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade were both behind it. Such assurances were apparently not given, for although Mr McKenna and Mr Runciman both supported the bill, Mr Hobhouse was found among its opponents.

The Radical followers of Sir John Simon and Mr Hobhouse made up a good share of the opposition on the first reading as well as on the later stages of the bill. But there was another section which had to be counted at the beginning. These were the Irish Nationalists. For reasons sufficient to the Government at the time Ireland was excluded from the operation of the National Registration Bill and the Military Service Bill did not apply there. Nevertheless, Mr Redmond, leader of the party in the Commons, felt justified in opposing the measure on its first reading. Asserting the unfairness to the House of making the new departure simply to redeem a personal pledge, he placed the burden of proof upon the Government and demanded justification for the bill on definite grounds of military necessity.⁸ The Labour members, the disaffected Liberals and the Irish Nationalists, then, made up the vote opposed to the bill.

Besides the Prime Minister's speech in bringing in the bill,

7) 77 H.C. Deb., 966-968.

8) 77 H.C. Deb., 1007: "I say that in asking the House of Commons to make this great departure from the principles and traditions of this country, the onus of proof lies on those who propose it, and that it is not fair to the House of Commons to propose this great departure simply on the grounds of fulfilling a certain personal pledge; but it is necessary, in order to justify the proposal, to show that it is absolutely necessary for the life of the nation. Until that is proved, for my part I remained anchored in my hostility to a system of compulsion full of menace for the future of the country".

by far the most forceful and telling appeal was made by Mr Balfour who wound up the debate for the Government. Mr Balfour immediately dismissed the question of principle as no longer pertinent and treated the matter as one of honor and expediency. In the first place, he argued, the Prime Minister's pledge bound the whole Government, and passing the bill, was, after all, a simple and direct affair of honor. Moreover, in refusing the bill the House would be refusing what a united Cabinet clearly considered a military necessity.⁹ The bill received a first reading with a majority of 298,-403 voting in favor and 105 in opposition.¹⁰

The substantial majority favoring the Government on the first reading was an earnest of its rapid passage into law. Yet it was stubbornly contested until the end, even though the opposition steadily dwindled. On the second reading opposition was again offered by Sir John Simon, while Mr Long appealed for the passage of the bill on the grounds of military necessity.¹¹ The abstention of the Irish Nationalists decreased the opposition vote and the second reading was granted by a vote of 431 to 39.¹² The Irish members apparently anticipated a heavy vote against the first reading which they expected to be met by a solid Labour opposition. The first vote, however, made it evident that the bill would pass and Mr Redmond withdrew the opposition of his followers in a speech characterized by great broad mindedness and good sense.¹³

This happy consummation was hailed by the "Spectator" with a

9) 77 H.C. Deb., 1244-46.

10) The vote by parties on the first reading stood: For, Unionist, 243; Liberal, 151; Labour, 8; against, Liberal, 34; Labour, 13; Nationalist, 58; see "Times", Jan. 8, p. 7.

11) 77 H.C. Deb., 1502 et seq.

12) 77 H.C. Deb., 1736.

13) 77 H.C. Deb., 1473.

fervent enthusiasm which was not without a touch of I-told-you-so sarcasm. "The debates on the Military Service Bill", it said, "ended in a veritable triumph for the Government, the second reading being carried by the huge majority of 392.... So much for 'the great voice of the people' being against compulsion".¹⁴ The opinion of the "New Statesman" fairly expressed the opposite viewpoint. The majority for the second reading, said this journal, "does not reflect any change of opinion even in the House, still less in the country; in the country signs point to an opposition which, if not growing, is deepening and consolidating. The promoters of the bill, having decided to employ the power of the majority even at the cost of destroying the unity of the nation..... wisely enough considered rhetoric a better tool than argument".¹⁵ It is difficult to choose between these two views. There were still anxious moments in store for the Government; and we are undoubtedly safer now in passing judgment on the temper of the people. On the other hand, rhetoric was not the only tool used by the Government and, if it was, the same weapon was assuredly used by their opponents. On the whole, the Government's conduct of the measure so far had been masterly, and we can not justly minimize their efforts, even though the abstention of the Nationalists may have made their work easier and certainly increased their majority.

So far Labour had presented no formidable obstacles to the plans of the Government. At the next stage, however, its attitude threatened a crisis in the Cabinet. It will be remembered that at the formation of the Coalition three Labour members were included in the ministry. The attitude of these men depended upon the action of their followers in the ranks of organized Labour. Up to the present moment

14) Spect. 116:65.

15) New States. 6:337-8.

all three were supporters of the bill. On January 6 the British Labour Congress convened at London. Although the Congress does not appear to have represented a majority of the workers, it was nevertheless important, representing, as it did, the management side of various workers' organizations. The old fear of industrial compulsion seems still to have animated the delegates, and by a majority of a million votes, the Congress instructed the Labour party in Parliament to oppose the bill pending. Accordingly the three Labour ministers immediately placed their resignations in the hands of the Prime Minister.

On January 12 Mr Asquith held a conference with the delegates of Labour at which he undertook to provide safeguards that the bill should not have the effect of introducing industrial compulsion. The resignations of the three Labour ministers were then withdrawn pending the annual conference of the Labour Party, due in Bristol on January 26. The Military Service Act had been passed into law when the Conference finally met. By a majority of nearly a million they approved the war. By large majorities they repudiated conscription and disapproved of the Military Service Act. By a small majority, the miners not voting, they decided not to agitate for repeal now that the measure had become law; and by a very large majority they agreed that the three Labour members should retain their posts in the Government.¹⁶ On January 24 the bill passed by a vote of 363 to 36.¹⁷ It received the Royal Assent three days later and came into operation March 2.

Briefly, the act (5 & 6 George V, c.104) provided for the automatic enlistment and transference to the reserve of all male subjects between the ages of 18 and 41 who were unmarried or widowers without children on August 15, 1915. Exemption might be obtained on grounds of

16) Nelson's Hist. War, 12:157-9.

17) 78 H.C. Deb., 1011-1012.

occupation in work of national importance, physical infirmity or conscientious objection to war, although the last applied only to combatant branches of the service. After application for exemption had been made the applicant could not be inducted into service until his case had been passed upon by the tribunals set up for the purpose. It was further provided that after the expiration of an exemption certificate, the holder was not liable for service for at least two months. The machinery for dealing with claims for exemption was to consist of three sets of tribunals. Local tribunals, consisting of from 5 to 25 members were to be set up in each registration district. Above these were placed appeal tribunals in areas to be defined by the Crown. A court of last resort was provided in a tribunal having appellate supervision over all cases in Great Britain.

The weaknesses of the bill were obvious and were soon to exhibit themselves during the attempts made to enforce it. It was designed to bring in the single men who had not attested under the Derby scheme. Application of compulsion to the married men was contingent upon the success achieved in enlisting the single men. Unfortunately, havens of refuge were open to the single men in the large number of reserved occupations which the Government, with a sincere desire to do justice to all, had constantly increased. If the single men found safe berths in munitions works and exempted trades, the work of combing them out would be endless. This is exactly what happened. Although a committee under the chairmanship of Mr Long sat continuously from the adoption of the Military Service Act, engaged in the revision of the lists of reserved trades, the pace set by the single men in crowding into these trades was apparently too fast for the Government.

In addition to this difficulty, which it was extremely hard to grapple with, other troubles made their appearance. The work of the local tribunals seems to have met with little genuine approval. In some cases exemptions were allowed to ninety per cent. of the applicants; in others, tribunals apparently tried to keep up a no-exemption record. These shortcomings were seized upon by "outraged" members of Parliament and were made into excellent capital for both sides in the press. The proceedings in Parliament from the date when the new act went into operation until the passage of the second act, are filled with criticisms of, and allegations against, the working of the tribunals, uttered with all the vehemence which prejudice and chagrin could impart to them.¹⁸ Saner heads lay the blame to the proper cause. It is probably true that, generally speaking, the local boards did as efficient work as possible under the circumstances. The possible grounds for exemption were so numerous that the work of handling and sifting thousands of cases must have been trying to a degree. Had more discrimination been shown by the Government in the days of the Derby scheme and had closer cooperation been maintained between the central government and the local tribunals, many of the later difficulties might have been obviated. Even on this point, however, extenuating circumstances might be urged. The problem of labour was a very serious one and the Government can not be harshly criticized for its efforts to meet wisely both the military and the industrial needs in a way which would bring victory without injustice and industrial disorganization. Judged in the light of these facts, then, the efficiency of the local boards seems to have been due, not to deliberate laxity, but rather to an excusable failure to do justice

18) E.g. see 81 H.C. Deb., passim.

under almost impossible circumstances.¹⁹

The number of exemptions granted, however, made the first Military Service Act unworkable. As early as February Lord Kitchener had hinted at the probable serious results of exemptions on the numbers immediately obtainable under enlistments in the reopened Derby groups from which so much was expected.²⁰ Just a month later he was constrained by recruiting results to admit that his fears had been realized.²¹ Lord Kitchener's brief official statement on this occasion exposed a situation which was rapidly becoming unbearable to the married men or at least to a part of them. Theoretically, the Military Service Act, by bringing in the single men, was justifying the retention of the married men. As a matter of fact, the single men were escaping service in large numbers while the married men were being inducted into service compulsorily under the terms of the pledge.

Very naturally the attested married men protested. Lord Derby who still held the post of Director of Recruiting, was held accountable by many for a state of affairs which was drifting surely towards confusion. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the Government's attempts at a settlement, by the end of March the recruiting question was in a hopeless muddle. By means of public meetings, letters to the press, and a National Union of Attested Married Men, the injustice of the situation was dinned into all ears. By the middle of March this agitation was reported as "somewhat venement...and not without danger

19) Spect. 116:275. On March 2 Lord Derby, speaking in the Lords, had expressed himself as being more alarmed by the probable effect of the vast number of exemptions than by the work of the local tribunals; see 21 H.L. Deb., 271

20) 21 H.L. Deb., 29.

21) " I regret to say that my fears have been realized during the last month. The original estimate of our requirements for April necessitated calling up some of the younger married men and the deficiencies of May will require the calling up of some of the younger attested married men earlier than we had hoped would have been necessary. 21 H.L. Deb., 408-9.

to the Government".²² To make matters worse the Government was without a guiding hand at the time. Mr Asquith was absent for some weeks during March and April on a visit to the Allied capitals. The policy of the Government (under the temporary leadership of Mr Bonar Law) was to attempt to deal with the exemption tangle and to drift. Day by day the situation grew more confused and hopeless until the public reaction seems to have changed to one of disgust and the people seemed ready to welcome any policy which would redeem the recruiting question from chaos.

On March 29, on a motion for adjournment, the House of Commons took up the question of the position of the attested married men. Very much that was old in recruiting arguments and little that was new, found expression at this sitting of the House. Sir Edward Carson, who, since his retirement from the Coalition, had joined in the Unionist demand for more vigorous measures, led the attack on the Government. In a scathing indictment of the half-measures of the Ministry, Sir Edward came out fairly and squarely for general compulsion.²³ Thus was fired the first gun in a drive for a new sort of compulsion. In an editorial two days later the "Times" said: "The growth of the popular demand for an amended Military Service Act becomes more manifest every day.. What the public asks is that all men of military age shall

22) Sat.Rev.121:266,268. See also Spect.116:431. It was very natural that Lord Derby should be so criticized, and yet, he doubtless acquitted himself as well as the situation permitted. His hands were really tied in the matter in the absence of a definite Government ruling on the question of exemptions.

23) 81 H.C.Deb.,818: "Why are the men dissatisfied?....It is simply for this reason, that you have been taking up this question piecemeal... Believe me, you will find before long....that the only possible way in which you can bring about equality of justice to all classes is to make your compulsion applicable to every man of military age in the country".

be dealt with upon a common basis, in order to redress flagrant injustice".²⁴ This became the burden of the "Times'" policy for a full month and the "Saturday Review" and "Spectator" expressed the same opinions. In line with these developments events moved rapidly during the month of April. The Government made its last attempt at a solution of the exemption problem when it issued its revised list of reserved occupations early in April. A large number of occupations formerly exempted were stricken from the list and in the words of the "Saturday Review", "the refugees are now pulled about their (i.e. the single men's) ears and the refugees stand naked to a world which has suddenly taken on the aspect of a pitiless recruiting sergeant".²⁵

In truth the Government action had come too late. The clause allowing two months' exemption to men whose certificates had been withdrawn unfortunately promised nothing but an expensive and troublesome delay. Recruiting under Lord Derby's groups was unsatisfactory. Confusion had now become so great that no plan so far proposed offered any hope of immediate results which were so imperatively demanded. On April 12 Sir Edward Carson, acting under instructions from the Unionist War Committee, put down in the House of Commons a resolution demanding such amendment to the Military Service Act as would produce as far as possible "equal sacrifice from all men of military age, by rendering all alike liable for military service during the present war".²⁶ Two days later the same demand was made in the upper

24) Times, March 31, p.9.

25) Sat.Rev.121:338.

26) Times, April 13, p.9.

House when Lord Milner moved a similar resolution.²⁷ The full tide towards general conscription was rising rapidly. The Government was forced to take cognizance of it but on the adjournment for the Easter recess the possibility of a Cabinet rupture precluded immediate action.

On April 19 Mr Asquith, in moving the adjournment for the Easter recess, said: "There are still material points of disagreement in the Cabinet and if these are not settled by agreement the result must be the break-up of the Government".²⁸ Commenting on the situation the same day, Lord Derby had said: "By Tuesday (April 25) one part of the Cabinet will either have converted the other or will remain in possession and the other will have disappeared".²⁹ The situation within the inner circle must have been a difficult one. Mr Asquith himself was not convinced of the expediency of granting the demands of the conscriptionists who seemed now more determined than ever. While Mr Lloyd George and the Unionists in the Ministry were doubtless ready enough to adopt general compulsion, the Labour members could not be expected to take the same view of the matter. Moreover, the Prime Minister's own followers among the Liberal party had registered their displeasure at his policies on the occasions of the National Registration Act and the first Military Service Act. With and eye to the reconciliation of the divergent views in the Cabinet

27) 21 H.L. Deb., 776: "That in the opinion of this House, it is necessary in order to secure the objects for which the country is fighting that an act should be passed without further delay rendering all men of military age liable to be called upon for military service during the continuance of the war". "Why go on", said Lord Milner, "yielding bit by bit and dealing piecemeal with a matter which cries so loudly, so incessantly for a final and comprehensive settlement".

28) 81 H.C. Deb., 2351.

29) 21 H.L. Deb., 806.

and a strengthening of his relations with his own party, Mr Asquith must have found the question a perplexing one indeed. His own views seemed to have inclined towards an amendment of the first Act as the best means of rectifying the errors arising from the Act as applied. Or, what is equally likely, his next move was the fruit of a compromise arrived at in the Cabinet during the Easter recess.³⁰

On April 25 the Houses reassembled in secret session to hear the proposals of the Government. Recourse was taken to this extraordinary proceeding in order to be able to quote recruiting figures with a view to convincing the Labour members of the seriousness of the situation.³¹ Basing their conclusions on the facts presented there, the Government outlined the provisions of the bill which two days later (April 27) was brought in by Mr Long.³² The new bill was, in effect, an amendment to the first Military Service Act and was designed to strengthen it without increasing greatly the measure of compulsion. Briefly, the proposed measure provided for, (1) the prolongation of the service of the time-expired men, whose period of service under the first Act could be continued for one year only; (2) the rendering of exempted men liable to service immediately upon the expiration of their certificates of exemption; (3) bringing under the terms of the first Act youths under eighteen on August 15, 1915, as they reached that age. Further, it was provided that an immediate effort should be made to obtain the men required by voluntary enlistment from amongst the unattested married men. If, by May 27, 50,000 men should not be secured by direct enlistment the Government would

30) Spect. 116:539

31) 81 H.C. Deb., 2611-12. "I attached great importance to the assent of the representatives of organized Labour..... That was the main purport of our reluctant recourse to the novel expedient of a secret session"

32) 81 H.C. Deb., 2463-66.

forthwith ask Parliament for compulsory powers. If enlistment for any week following May 27 should fall below 15000 the same course would be taken. These arrangements were to hold good until 200,000 men had been secured, the situation in the meantime to be under constant Government supervision. It was pointed out that, as under this scheme all available unattested married men would be enlisted either voluntarily or by compulsion, the main ground alleged for the release of the attested married men would disappear.

This attempt to please all factions met the fate usual with compromises--it pleased no one. Compulsionists could and did urge with reason that this was dealing with the matter piecemeal. Labour members could find an element of injustice in the retention of the time-expired men. Even the "Nation" could find none of its wishes fulfilled and had only sarcastic comments to make on the bill. The³³ debate in the Commons reflected all these objections. Sir Edward Carson objected violently to the Government's violation of its contract with the time-expired men, many of whom had by this time served 13 years in the army. Mr Stephen Walsh, the Labour member representing the Lancashire miners, plead eloquently for some degree of equality of sacrifice, which, in his view, was attainable only by general compulsion. In short, no feature of the bill met with anything like general approval. In the midst of the discussion Mr Asquith, seeing the opposition of the House, withdrew the motion to bring in the bill.³⁴

33) Nation, 19:118: "We are therefore in for a further period of examination by tribunals, a struggle for exemption, a persecution and forcible enrolment of conscientious objectors, a fresh crop of anomalies and absurdities and a final gathering in of a negligible number of recruits, backed by boys, most of whom can hardly be available for months to some."

34) 81 H.C. Deb., 2561-62: "...I should be very loth..to force upon the House...a Bill which so many members are not prepared to accept.... Therefore I think I shall be meeting the real necessities...by withdrawing the bill".

On this day the House adjourned until May 2.

The defeat of the proposed bill occasioned little surprise and met with general approval. But it placed the Cabinet in a position which offered a critical alternative--adoption of general conscription or resignation. During the short adjournment a decision was reached without a rupture and on May 2 the Prime Minister announced that a bill providing for general compulsion would be introduced on the following day. A long debate followed on a motion for adjournment, in which the die-hards were led by Sir John Simon who had never been won over and had persisted in obstructing every effort aimed at conscription. Speaking for his followers, Sir John characterized the new bill as a logical but baleful consequence of its predecessor, denied the military necessity for its introduction and charged that the expediency which had influenced the Prime Minister was "very largely political expediency".³⁵ Whatever may have influenced Mr Asquith--and he would naturally be affected by considerations for preserving the integrity of his Government--the House on May 3 granted the new bill a first reading.

On the second reading the bill was violently but vainly opposed by Mr Llewelyn Williams and Sir John Simon who turned out to be unequal to the arguments of Mr Lloyd George and Mr Ellis Griffith. Mr Henderson wound up the debate for the Government in a dignified and logical appeal. "It seems to me", he said, "that we are led to this position: The General Staff have advised us that these men are necessary and the Board of Trade have agreed that these men can be spared. I hope that by this bill we shall secure the national unity that is desired... If the delay has enabled us to come before the House and

35) 81 H.C. Deb., 2619-2621.

the country as a united Government, we are going to get something like a united House of Commons.. Then it seems to me that the policy of delay... will absolutely turn out beneficial to the nation, to the Allies and to all concerned. For these reasons I ask the House of Commons to give a second reading to the Bill.³⁶ The division showed 328 for the bill with 36 opposed.

The third reading called forth a long but uninteresting debate before a dwindling House. The forces of the voluntaryists were led by Mr Snowden, Mr Aringle, Mr Thomas and Sir John Simon, while the Government left the conduct of the bill to Mr Long who was seconded by Mr Walsh. The fate of the bill was at no time in doubt and, in an atmosphere of anticlimax, the depleted House, on May 16, by a vote of 250 to 35, passed it.³⁷ On May 25 it received the Royal Assent and was entered on the statute book. (6 & 7 George V, c.15.)

Under the provisions of the new Act every male subject in Great Britain (Ireland was still excluded) between the ages of 18 and 41 was made liable for military service from a date 30 days following the passage of the Act. Time-expired men were to be retained with the colours or recalled if under 41. The Army Council reserved the right to review all medical certificates granted since August 1915 as well as all exemption certificates, which had made the combing out of eligible single men so difficult a matter. Conscientious objectors were to be held for non-combatant service. The withdrawal of exemption certificates and the cutting down of the list of reserved occupations simplified the work of the tribunals.

England passed quietly and without serious objection under a

36) 82 H.C. Deb., 264.

37) 82 H.C. Deb., 1488.

rule of universal military discipline so long unknown to free peoples. Greater trials of the national temper lay in the future. Boys of 17 and men of 50 were yet to be pressed into service. Ireland, so long excluded, has bowed to the application of conscription. However, later developments under the system of compulsion do not fall within the scope of this work as originally planned. But with the adoption of the second Military Service Act, England had won the victory at home without which victory in the field would undeniably have been impossible.³⁸

The people have since been aroused to the urgency and magnitude of the task. The magnificent loyalty and unstinted sacrifice of dominions in every sea, the devotion of a far-flung Empire, whose only bond to the motherland is the silken thread of common pride in a common tradition, and the chastening influence of national bereavement--all have combined to inspire Britain with a sense of the justice of her cause and to nerve her for the making of superhuman efforts.

38) On May 2, Mr Asquith announced in the House of Commons that the total effort of the Empire up to that date was in excess of five million men; 81 H.C. Deb., 2612. At present (May 1918) it is estimated that seven and a half million men are under arms. Of this number England alone has contributed perhaps seventy-five per cent.

Chapter Six. Conclusion.

It all came about in a characteristically British way. If it were a matter which admitted of mathematical demonstration one might cite chapter and verse to prove that Britain blundered into conscription. President Lowell, in his work on the government of England, says something to the effect that the English have the peculiar genius for accomplishing satisfactory results by way of ridiculously illogical processes. When the material is all at hand the events of 1914-1916 will bear out the aphorism. The problem was a difficult one. The means of solution were exactly what one would expect in the case of England and---exactly what no one did expect! There is something peculiarly instructive to the philosophically inclined in following the currents and cross-currents, in tarrying with the eddies and in finally mounting to the long-poised crest of public opinion during the two years under survey. Something half amusing, too, were it not so serious, to witness from our perspective the strivings and wrestlings, the criminations and recriminations, the feverish strugglings and panting efforts, to forward or ward off, what was looked upon as a necessity or a menace. All in all, something grimly awful in the thing as a whole.

Minute dissection is now impossible. It is profitable, however, to point out some of the outstanding features of the slow drift towards conscription, which so immensely complicated the problem.

It was to little purpose that conscriptionists argued that Agincourt and Naseby were fought and won by pressed men; that, as Mr Lloyd George pointed out, English liberties had been won and preserved on more than one occasion by conscripts. Those days were gone and with them the old ideas. Two centuries of freedom had made a free

people, phlegmatic and undisciplined. To array the nation was a matter not of fiat legislation but of consistent education. The problem of securing justice to all in prosecuting a cause which meant sacrifice to all tremendously complicated the whole question. Had it been possible to beat to arms a trained nation overnight, the devious path to conscription might have been avoided. But that would not have been England. At the general election the Englishman approved or repudiated the policies of his leaders, and had done so for as long as he could remember. In his trade union he bargained with his employer on something like an equal footing, and had done so for years. The benefits of a war, to be purchased at the sacrifice of principles which came to him as a hardly-won heritage, seemed altogether negative. To call forth such sacrifice, to convince without cajolery, to win over without fraud, to guarantee safeguards for the surrender of rights--these were the problems to be met and solved.

On the mechanical side an equally difficult situation confronted the nation. The peace-time arsenals of England could furnish only an infinitesimal part of the mountains of munitions required. A tremendous expansion must be made here. On the other hand, the vast export business of the kingdom must be maintained and the making of munitions must not encroach here. Neutral trade and the transportation of arms and equipment must each have its allotted share of shipping and labour. Nowhere must there be disproportionate supply. Here was a situation which required a nicety of adjustment which normal needs had not brought out and in attaining which the experience of years must be compressed into months. And the question of Labour dominated all. The interests of the worker must be safeguarded, his demands must be considered, if his cooperation, so vital,

were obtained. Moreover, it was useless to denude industry of labour to raise an army. A selective principle must be adopted. To secure this the Government reserved occupations until recruiting came to a standstill. To retrieve its blunder revision was attempted. But the confusion had led to despair and despair in turn to a call for conscription as the only way out of an intolerable tangle. Experimentation with modified compulsion in the spring of 1916 was doomed to fail for the Government acted upon its sensing of the public temper after that temper had changed to one of acquiescence. In short, national unity came, not as a result of the adoption of general compulsion but with the slowly and steadily dawning sense of national blundering in which leaders and people shared alike.

APPENDIX A.

Lord Derby's Reports.

To Field-Marshal The Earl Kitchener, K.G.,

Secretary of State for War .

1.(December 12,1915).

I propose to divide my report into two parts. The first part describes the action taken with regard to the canvass of unstarred men and the second part gives the results in figures with my own deductions therefrom.

To the first part I am glad to say I have secured the unanimous assent of my colleagues on the Joint Committee, formed of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee and Joint Labour Recruiting Committee, which I will hereafter call the Central Committee.

The deductions made from the figures and given in the second part of the report are given on my own responsibility.

I took up office as Director-General of Recruiting at Lord Kitchener's request on Monday, the 11th October.

On that day I met the Central Committee, and laid before them a proposal that what was known as the "Pink Form" canvassing should be done through Local Parliamentary Committees. They accepted my proposal and undertook to see the work done.

This will be an appropriate opportunity of expressing my most sincere thanks to the Central Committee and to the Parliamentary Recruiting Committees throughout the country. They have given me the most loyal and whole-hearted support, and without their assistance I am convinced the canvass would have been an entire failure.

I would also beg to thank the Military Authorities both in the War Office and throughout the country. The burden of work of a

novel and exacting type that has fallen upon them has been met with a very evident desire to do everything possible to make the voluntary system a success.

I would especially thank Colonel Gosset, D.A.A.G., who by his foresight has made the canvass comparatively easy, and by his tact in dealing with difficult questions as they arose has materially lightened the task which was set before the Central Committee and myself.

I am quite aware that criticisms will be levelled at the inadequacy of the arrangements of recruiting offices for dealing with the abnormal flow of recruits during the present week. Such criticisms are most unjust. The impossibility of obtaining sufficient medical officers and experienced clerks has been the cause of the delay. This delay would have been obviated if there had been, during the past six weeks when the scheme has been before the public, a steady flow of recruits instead of the abnormal rush at the eleventh hour.

On the 16th October I laid before the Central Committee the scheme for enlisting men in groups. The Committee was good enough to approve of it. I need not go into any description of it, but it has formed the basis on which the whole of the present recruiting scheme has been worked and adopted as being the best way of getting men for the Army with the minimum amount of inconvenience to industry.

At subsequent meetings it was decided to form Local Tribunals, which have now been set up by the Local Government Board, and Advisory Committees, which are in process of being set up by the Local Parliamentary Committees, the latter to advise the War Office representative as to what action he should take before the Local Tribunal in cases of appeal.

Canvass commenced in each locality as the cards were ready for issue. Through nobody's fault, in some areas there was, I regret to say, a delay in their issue. It arose from the fact that there has to be a redistribution, as the system adopted by the Central Committee was not the same as that which had been previously proposed by the Military Authorities.

It was originally intended that the campaign should come to a conclusion on the 30th November, but it was subsequently decided, so as to avoid breaking into the week, to extend it to the 4th December, and for the purpose of giving me time to write my report further to extend the time for enlistment, both directly and in groups, to the 11th December.

Whilst gross numbers are available up to the 11th December. I regret to say details as to groups are only forthcoming up to the 30th November.

Many difficulties have been met with, but the chief difficulty has been the unreliability of the starring as distinguishing between those who should and those who should not be taken for the Army. Instead of starring being of assistance, it has been a distinct hindrance to the canvass. More especially is this so in rural and semi-rural areas, owing to the fact that it was known before Registration Day what branches of the agricultural industry would be starred, with the result that many men who had no right to do so claimed to come under these particular headings. The sense of unfairness thus created and the inequality of treatment of farmers has been most detrimental in these areas. The farmer himself is not starred, but there are numberless cases of his sons and labourers being starred.

as cowmen and horsemen etc., though in many instances it is known that they are really not so engaged.

It is essential that the starred list should be carefully investigated, and in cases of misdescription the star removed and the man made available for military service. This applies to the starred men in all industries.

The issue, during the process of canvass, of lists of trades which were to be considered "reserved occupations" has also proved an obstacle. I recognize that it was essential that such lists should be issued, but the fact remains that trades other than those mentioned in these lists have been applying to be so included, and the men engaged in those trades are expecting to be treated in the same way as starred men, and have been deterred from coming forward.

Many men also who would willingly serve find themselves barred from doing so by domestic, financial, and business obligations. This especially applies to professional and commercial men who find difficulties in meeting such obligations as payment of rent, insurance premium, interest on loans connected with their business, and provision for their family, due to the fact that their income is entirely dependent on their individual efforts, and ceases when they join the Colours--separation and dependant's allowances being quite inadequate in such cases to meet these obligations. This applies not only to married men, but also to single men in many cases.

Another obstacle to recruiting has been the unequal treatment of individuals. Parents and relations especially cannot understand why their sons, husbands, or brothers should join while other young men hold back and secure lucrative employment at home.

Apart from the number of men who have actually enlisted and attested there are many who have promised to enlist when "so and so" has also promised to go. There may, of course, be a number of men who make this answer as an excuse, But it is genuine in a very large number of cases, and is accentuated by bad starrng, there is no reason to doubt.

Further, the system of submitting cases to tribunals to decide is a novel one and is viewed with some distrust, partly from the publicity which may be given to private affairs and partly to a fear, which personally I do not share, that cases will not be fairly and impartially dealt with.

The canvass shows very distinctly that it is not want of courage that is keeping men back, nor is there the slightest sign but that the country as a whole is as determined to support the Prime Minister in his pledge made at Guildhall on the 9th November 1914, as it was when that pledge was made. There is abundant evidence of a determination to see the war through to a successful conclusion.

DERBY.

II. (12th December, 1915).

The second part of this report is not given. The figures it contained were rendered valueless owing to the influx of recruits being so great during the last few days on which enlistment under the group system was open.

III. (20th December, 1915).

I would ask that the figures in the second part of my previous report, should be ignored, because, as I pointed out in that report, the influx of recruits was so great in the last few days on which the group scheme was in operation, that, for any purpose of

helping the Government to arrive at a decision with regard to the future system of recruiting, they were valueless.

I have only taken the figures as between 23rd October 1915 and 15th December 1915, the period when canvassing for the group system was being carried out. The gross figures are shown in the table.

Large as are the figures, I am afraid that on analysis they do not prove as satisfactory as I could have wished. Owing to the great rush of recruits it was impossible in many cases to have more than a most perfunctory examination, and the number of men who will be rejected when the various groups are called up and are subject to a proper examination must be very large, the number of men actually unexamined being 925,445. This total includes both starred and unstarred men.

23rd October to 15th December 1915 (inclusive).

	Single	Married
Men of military age(a)	2,179,231	2,832,210
Number starred	690,138	915,491

Number of men enlisted(b)	103,000	112,431
Number of men attested(c)	840,000	1,344,979
Number of men rejected(b)	207,000	221,853

Total-----	1,150,000	1,679,263

Men of military age	2,179,231	2,832,210
Presenting themselves	1,150,000	1,679,263

Number remaining	1,029,231	1,152,947

Total starred men attested	312,067	449,808
Number unstarred men attested	527,933	895,171

(a) Men who joined His Majesty's Army between the 15th August 1915 and the 23rd October 1915 are excluded from these figures.

(b) Whilst total is based on actual records, the distribution as between single and married is only an estimate, but may be taken as substantially accurate.

(c) Actual records.

Grand total of military age-----	5,011,441
Total attested, enlisted and rejected-----	2,829,263
Total number remaining-----	2,182,178

For the same reason--the great rush of recruits--I fear there may be many instances where men have not been noted as being starred, badged, or belonging to reserved occupations, and a deduction must be made on this account.

Lastly, there are many who will come under the heading of being indispensable--men who are the only sons of widows, sole support of a family, etc.

Single Men Attested .

Total number of single men attested-----	840,000	
Of these the number starred was-----	312,067	

The number of unstarred single men attested was therefore-----	527,933	
For final rejection as medically unfit a number of unstarred men have not been examined, say-----	260,000#	

Balance-----	267,933	
Deduct 10 per cent. badged and reserved-----	26,793#	

Balance-----	241,140	
Deduct 10 per cent. indispensable-----	24,114#	
	-----	217,026
As shown above, it is estimated that of the unstarred single men attested those not ex- amined as to medical fitness numbered-----		
	260,000#	
Deduct 10 per cent. badged and reserved-----	26,000#	

Balance-----	234,000	
Deduct 10 per cent. indispensable-----	23,400#	

Balance-----	210,600	
Deduct 40 per cent. unfit-----	84,240	
	-----	126,360
Estimated net number available of single men attested		343,386

The figures marked # are estimates only.

Married Men Attested .

Total number of married men attested-----	1,344,979
Of these the number starred was-----	449,808

The number of unstarred married men attested was therefore-----	895,171
For final rejection as medically un- fit a number of unstarred men have not been examined, say-----	445,000 #

Balance-----	450,171
Deduct 15 per cent. badged and reserved-----	67,526#

Balance-----	382,645
Deduct 20 per cent. indispensable-----	76,529#

	306,116
As shown above, it is estimated that of the unstarred married men attested those not examined as to medical fitness numbered-----	
	445,000#
Deduct 15 per cent. badged and reserved-----	66,750

Balance-----	378,250
Deduct 20 per cent. indispensable-----	75,650#

Balance-----	302,600
Deduct 40 per cent. unfit-----	121,040#

	181,560
Estimated net number available of married men attested-----	487,676

The figures marked # are estimates only.	-----

(There are probably more married men than single men who are in reserved occupations, and certainly amongst the indispensable class I have increased considerably the percentage of deductions in both these cases.)

My calculations for these necessary deductions have been submitted to Dr T.H.C. Stevenson, Superintendent of Statistics at the General Register Office, and the preceding tables are now presented in accordance with his recommendations. The percentages of deductions are my own. They must of necessity be only estimates, but they have been arrived at upon the best information possible.

But, as in the former Report, I must again draw attention to the fact that the men in the married groups can only be assumed to be available if the Prime Minister's pledge to them has been redeemed by the single men attesting in such numbers as to leave only a negligible quantity unaccounted for.

On comparing the above figures it will be seen that of the 2,179,251 single men available, only 1,150,000 have been accounted for, leaving a residue unaccounted for of 1,029,251.

Deducting the number of starred single men who have attested, 312,067, from total number of starred single men, 690,138, leaves 378,071 starred men.

If we deduct this number from 1,029,251 (the remainder of single men left who have not offered themselves), it shows a total of 651,160 unstarred single men unaccounted for.

This is far from being a negligible quantity, and, under the circumstances, I am very distinctly of opinion that in order to redeem the pledge mentioned above it will not be possible to hold married men to their attestation unless and until the services of single men have been obtained by other means, the present system having failed to bring them to the colours.

I have been at some pains to ascertain the feeling of the country, and I am convinced that not only must faith be kept with the married men in accordance with the Prime Minister's pledge, but more than that; in my opinion some steps must be taken to replace as far as possible the single men now starred, or engaged in reserved occupations, by older and married men, even if these men have to a certain extent to be drawn from the ranks of those already serving. Especially does this apply to those who have joined these occupations

since the date of the Royal Assent to the National Registration Act. This applies, though naturally in a minor degree, to munitions workers.

There is another point to which I would most earnestly ask the Government to give attention. I have already drawn attention in my previous report to the detrimental effect of the issue from time to time of lists of reserved occupations has had on recruiting. Even since that report was written further and lengthy lists have been issued. I do not presume to state what are or are not industries indispensable to this country, but if there is to be any further reservation of occupations, it is quite clear that the figures I have given above must be subject to a reduction, and I cannot help hoping that there should be some finality to the issue of these lists.

Before concluding, it might be interesting to give one or two features of the campaign. The figures given above refer only to recruits received between the 23rd October and the 15th December, but as I have been in my present office since the 11th October I include recruits for immediate enlistment from that date to Sunday the 19th December inclusive and I also include belated returns of men (61,651) taken in the group system. It has not, however, been possible to allot these latter accurately as between single and married; the majority appear to be men in starred occupations. During that time there have been taken for the Army as follows:

Immediate enlistment-----	275,031
Attestation in groups-----	2,246,630

A gross total of-----	2,521,661

Some of the figures of the take of recruits under the group system for particular days may also be of interest:-

On Friday, the 10th December, we took	193,527
On Saturday 11th " "	336,075
On Sunday 12th " "	325,258
On Monday 13th " "	215,618

Or a total in the four days of	1,070,478

In order, however, to get at the number of men who have offered themselves it is necessary to add to the above figures those who have been definitely rejected on medical grounds, viz., 428,853. This shows that a total of 2,950,514 men have shown their willingness to serve their country, provided they were able to be spared from their employment and could be accepted as medically suitable.

There will be additions to make to these numbers, slight, but very significant. In foreign towns where there are English communities, men have banded themselves together to come under the group system. Men have written from Hong-kong, Rhodesia, Cadiz, California, offering to come home to be attested for Army Reserve (Section B).

DERBY.

APPENDIX B.

The following lists are intended to show not only the numerical opposition to National Registration and compulsory service bills in the House of Commons, but also the fact that a few men formed the core of the opposition. An examination of the figures will show that in each case it was Liberal and not Labour votes which were counted against the Government.

The following voted "aye" on a motion of Sir Thomas Whittaker to postpone consideration of the National Registration Bill. Of the 30 adverse votes, 22 were Liberals, 7 were Labourites and 1 was an Independent Nationalist (Mr Ginnell).

Anderson, W.C.	Lab. member for	Sheffield.
Baker, J.A.	Lib. "	Finsbury, E.
Bowerman, C.W.	Lab. "	Deptford.
Chancellor, H.G.	Lib. "	Shoreditch.
Clough, William	Lib. "	Yorks, Skipton.
Davies, Timothy	Lib. "	Lines., Louth.
Denman, R.D.	Lib. "	Carlisle.
Essex, Sir R.W.	Lib. "	Stafford.
Ginnell, L.	Nat. "	Westmeath, N.
Hobhouse, C.D.H.	Lib. "	Bristol, E.
Hogge, J.M.	Lib. "	Edinburgh, E.
John, E.T.	Lib. "	Denbighshire, E.
Jowett, F.W.	Lab. "	Bradford, W.
King, Joseph	Lib. "	Somerset, N.
Lambert, Richard	Lib. "	Wilts, Cricklade.
Lough, Thomas	Lib. "	Islington, W.
MacDonald, J.M.	Lib. "	Falkirk Burghs.
MacDonald, J. Ramsay	Lab. "	Leicester.
M'Callum, Sir J.M.	Lib. "	Paisley.
Outhwaite, R.L.	Lib. "	Hanley.
Ponsonby, A.A.W.H.	Lib. "	Stirling Burghs.
Pratt, J.W.	Lib. "	Linlithgowshire.
Pringle, W.M.R.	Lib. "	Lanark, N.W.
Runciman, Walter	Lib. "	Hartlepool.
Sherwell, A.J.	Lib. "	Huddersfield.
Snowden, Philip	Lab. "	Blackburn.
Thomas, J.H.	Lab. "	Derbyshire.
Trevelyan, C.P.	Lib. "	Yorks, Elland.
Whitehouse, J.H.	Lib. "	Lanark, Mid.
Wilson, W.T.	Lab. "	Westthoughton.

List of members voting "no" on the third reading of the first Military Service Bill, January 24, 1916. Of the 36 votes cast against the Bill, 30 were Liberal, 5 Labour and 1 an Irish Nationalist.

Anderson, W.C.	Lab.	member for	Sheffield.
Arnold, Sydney	Lib.	"	" Yorks, W.R.
Baker, J.A.	Lib.	"	" Finsbury, E.
Barlow, Sir J.E.	Lib.	"	" Somerset.
Burns, Hon. John	Lib.	"	" Battersea.
Byles, Sir W.P.	Lib.	"	" Salford.
Chancellor, H.G.	Lib.	"	" Shoreditch.
Clough, William	Lib.	"	" Yorks, Skipton.
Denman, R.D.	Lib.	"	" Carlisle.
Ginnell, L.	Nat.	"	" Westmeath, N.
Goldstone, Frank	Lab.	"	" Sunderland.
Harvey, A.G.C.	Lib.	"	" Rochdale.
Harvey, T.E.	Lib.	"	" Leeds, W.
Hogge, J.M.	Lib.	"	" Edinburgh, E.
Holt, R.D.	Lib.	"	" Hexham.
John, E.T.	Lib.	"	" Denbighshire.
Jones, Leif	Lib.	"	" Notts, Rushcliffe.
King, Joseph	Lib.	"	" Somerset, N.
Lamb, Sir E.H.	Lib.	"	" Rochester.
Lambert, Richard	Lib.	"	" Wilts, Cricklade.
Lough, Thomas	Lib.	"	" Islington, W.
Mason, D.M.	Lib.	"	" Coventry.
Molteno, P.A.	Lib.	"	" Dumfriesshire.
Morrell, Philip	Lib.	"	" Burnley.
Outhwaite, R.L.	Lib.	"	" Hanley.
Parker, James	Lab.	"	" Halifax.
Ponsonby, A.A.W.H.	Lib.	"	" Stirling Burghs.
Pringle, W.M.R.	Lib.	"	" Lanark, N.W.
Rees, G.C.	Lib.	"	" Carnarvon.
Richardson, Thomas	Lab.	"	" Whitehaven.
Rowntree, Arnold	Lib.	"	" York City.
Sherwell, A.J.	Lib.	"	" Huddersfield.
Simon, Sir John A.	Lib.	"	" Walthamstow.
Smith, H.B. Lees	Lib.	"	" Northampton.
Snowden, Philip	Lab.	"	" Blackburn.
Trevelyan, C.P.	Lib.	"	" Yorks, Elland.

List of members voting "no" on the third reading of the second Military Service Bill, May 16, 1916. Of these 26 were Liberals and 9 Labour members.

Abraham, Rt. Hon. W.	Lab.	member for Rhondda.
Anderson, W. C.	Lab.	" " Sheffield.
Arnold, Sydney	Lib.	" " Yorks, W. R.
Baker, J. A.	Lib.	" " Finsbury, E.
Barlow, Sir J. E.	Lib.	" " Somerset.
Burns, Rt. Hon. J.	Lib.	" " Battersea.
Byles, Sir W. P.	Lib.	" " Salford.
Chancellor, H. G.	Lib.	" " Shoreditch.
Clynes, J. R.	Lab.	" " Manchester, N. E.
Harvey, T. E.	Lib.	" " Leeds, W.
Hogge, J. M.	Lib.	" " Edinburgh.
Holt, R. D.	Lib.	" " Hexham.
John, E. T.	Lib.	" " Denbighshire.
Jowett, F. W.	Lab.	" " Bradford, W.
King, Joseph	Lib.	" " Somerset, N.
Lamb, Sir E. H.	Lib.	" " Rochester.
Lough, Thomas	Lib.	" " Islington, W.
MacDonald, J. Ramsay	Lab.	" " Leicester.
Mason, D. M.	Lib.	" " Coventry.
Molteno, P. A.	Lib.	" " Dumfriesshire.
Morrell, Philip	Lib.	" " Burnley.
Outhwaite, R. L.	Lib.	" " Hanley.
Ponsonby, A. A. W. H.	Lib.	" " Stirling Nburghs.
Pringle, W. M. R.	Lib.	" " Lanark, N. W.
Richards, Thomas	Lab.	" " Monmouth, W.
Richardson, Thomas	Lab.	" " Whitehaven.
Rowntree, Arnold	Lib.	" " York City.
Runciman, Walter	Lib.	" " Hartlepool.
Sherwell, A. J.	Lib.	" " Huddersfield.
Simon, Sir John A.	Lib.	" " Walthamstow.
Snowden, Philip	Lab.	" " Blackburn.
Thomas, J. H.	Lab.	" " Derbyshire.
Trevelyan, C. P.	Lib.	" " Yorks, Elland.
Whitehouse, J. H.	Lib.	" " Lanark, Mid.
Williams W. Llewelyn	Lib.	" " Carmarthen.

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II. Newspapers and Periodicals.

A. The London "Times"; August 4, 1914--May 20, 1916. One of the Northcliffe papers. Extremely Tory in policy, favoring National Service and unfriendly to the Asquith Government. Cites as Times.

B. The "Spectator"; a weekly journal devoted to current events politics and letters. Liberal in its views and loyal to the Asquith Government. Opportunistic in its attitude towards compulsion. Representative of the solid, propertied classes. Cited as Spect.

C. The "Saturday Review". Extremely conservative in its tone. A consistent advocate of National Service and unsympathetic towards the pretensions of Labour. Cited as Sat. Rev.

D. The "Nation"; weekly; furnishes an antidote to the extreme conservatism of the "Saturday Review". Unflinching opponent of compulsion; pacifist in its policy and friendly to Labour. Cited as Nation.

E. The "New Statesman"; one of the more recently-founded weekly reviews; similar in make-up to the three journals above. A champion of the Labour interests, opposed to conscription and very

critical of Mr Lloyd George and his "apostasy" to the conscriptionist party. Rather intemperate at times and not always consistent in its policy. Cited as New States.

F. The "Contemporary Review", the "Fortnightly Review", and the "Nineteenth Century and After"--similar in make-up and quality of contents. Offer a forum for the expression of views on current topics. The editorial and semi-editorial comments and interpretations of public issues are particularly illuminating and usually presented in a judicial spirit. Cited as Contemp.Rev., Fortn.Rev., and XIXth Cent.

III. Contemporary Accounts.

A. The London Times History of the War, especially volumes 5 and 6. Composed of monthly issues dealing with military and domestic affairs, and bound thirteen issues to the volume. Deals very largely with the naval and military operations. Is serviceable for the chronology of events but carries the Tory bias of the "Times" in regard to political affairs. Cited as Times Hist.War.

B. Nelson's History of the War, especially volumes 12 and 14. Written by John Buchan, the military historian of the Great War, for Thomas Nelson and Sons, London, Edinburgh and New York. A popular account which has run to more than twenty volumes, dealing almost exclusively with naval and military operations. Somewhat critical of the Asquith Government but, on the whole, reasonably fair. Combines the interest of a contemporary account with the shortcomings inevitable to such works. Cited as Nelson's Hist.War.

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A. The Statesman's Yearbook, 1915, 1916, 1917. The standard British statistical yearbook. Figures and brief resumes dealing with

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B. Whitaker's Almanack, 1916. A similar publication, not so exclusively statistical. Cited as Whitaker's Almanack.

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